

GERMAN
LITERATURE
HUN

GERMAN

versus

HUN

by

Carl Brinitzer and Berthe Grossbard

Translated by
Bernard Miall

With a Foreword by the
Rt. Hon. Duff Cooper

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German versus Hun

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Foreword

This is a most valuable book. I hope that it will have a wide circulation.

It is most important that all those who are fighting against Germany at present should form a correct estimate against what it is they are fighting.

Here is the truth about Germany and the Germans written not by any foreigners or enemies but by Germans themselves. Out of their own mouths let them be judged.

DUFF COOPER

MINISTRY OF INFORMATION

8th July, 1940

Introduction

The Germans have played their part in European history for two thousand years. For two thousand years the German leopard has not changed his spots.

The Nazi system of today is only a new form of an old disease. For as long as there have been Germans there have been Nazis.

All through the centuries Germans have dreamed Hitler's dreams. The foreigner was well aware that the Germans were "a nation of dreamers," but his interpretation of their dreams was a false one. Those who follow dreams—he thought—snatch at the wind. But it was not the wind at which the Germans snatched; it was not at shadows that they grasped. They snatched at mastery; they reached out for the territory of their neighbours; and while the Germans proceeded to realize their dreams, other peoples slept the sleep of the just, until the words of the Psalmist were fulfilled: "Many are the afflictions of the righteous."

Like a stormcloud the Cimbri and Teutones burst upon Gaul and Italy: a cloud of three hundred thousand warriors. No one knew whence they came. Strong Roman forces were submerged. The feeble opposition encouraged the invaders to march upon Rome. In all the countries through which they had passed they had been victorious, and they had everywhere loaded themselves with booty. Thereupon—so Tacitus records—they resolved that they would call no halt until they had destroyed Rome and devastated Italy.

The Cimbri pushed forward to the north of the Alps; the Teutones marched along the coast, through Liguria. At last they appeared before the Roman encampment. They roared and bellowed in a strange, unintelligible tongue, and their

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multitudes filled the plain. But Marius, in command of the Roman legions, let the savages rage and shriek in front of his camp. In small detachments he set his men upon the rampart, whence they could observe the enemy. So he accustomed them to the sight of these hostile figures, with their strangely savage and alien voices, their unfamiliar weapons, their unexpected movements.

What had at first sight startled and dismayed the Romans gradually became familiar to them, since it was constantly before their eyes. Marius knew that unfamiliar apparitions are often terrifying, but that even real dangers lose their terrors when one is accustomed to them.

These wise tactics of Marius were unfortunately forgotten during the two thousand years that followed.

Again and again men allowed themselves to be intimidated by the confused war-cry of the Germans, and if by chance a German nightingale broke into song they were ready to believe that the primeval German forest was a fairyland.

Never since the days of Marius have men climbed upon the rampart in order to accustom themselves to the warlike aspect of the Germans. Instead of watching from the wall they have preferred to wander independently through Germany, or have invoked the aid of Messrs. Cook's travel agency. Yet nearly all those who have visited Germany have done as did the worthy Mme. de Staël, of whom Heine made such sport. They saw only what they wished to see: "a misty land of spirits, where men without bodies, all virtue, wandered over fields of snow, discoursing upon morals and metaphysics." They saw brown shirts at the party rallies, but no brown souls. They saw impressive "marches past," but no concentration camps. They saw the palms of peace in Hitler's hand, but not the tanks and aeroplanes and submarines which were building by day and by night in the German factories and shipyards. They allowed themselves to be deceived by a brilliant illusion: just as their fathers and grandfathers and great-grandfathers had seen in Prussia

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la patrie de la pensée, and had regarded Germany as the second mother of the Muses.

Yet the greatest Germans were in all ages inclined to be sceptical about their own people. While their compatriots were hoarsely bawling “Deutschland, Deutschland über alles,” while the German philosophers were preaching: “If the German people founders the whole human race will sink with it, without hope of eventual restoration,” they wrote of Germany in words which were full of bitterness and despair. More plainly than the foreigner they saw the faults and weaknesses of their countrymen, their strength and limitations. They saw that the Germans are too inclined to insist upon the trivial and petty things of life, while allowing the big things to escape them. They realized that the Germans would have invented pedantry if it had not already existed.

They heard with foreboding the rustle of the wings of the Prussian eagle. They uttered their warning against the Prussianization of Germany, for they preferred freedom without unity to unity without freedom. But when they were compelled to keep silence, or were shouted down, they turned from their compatriots with disgust. They began to divest themselves of their Germanism.

So it is that even if every “good” German is a good Nazi the best Germans are not Germans at all.

I

The Writing on the Wall

Alas, we have no longer any regard for the truth, but all those whom we attack must be absolutely guilty . . . and must confess their guilt. FRIEDRICH VON SPEE, 1631



Roman patriotism! God save us from it, as from the stature of a giant! We should find no chair to sit upon; no bed in which to lie. WOLFGANG GOETHE, 1771



Germany, without a doubt, must be credited with one of the most important discoveries of the century, which, like all German discoveries, will be reverently remembered by posterity. . . . In short, we are the first to show how imbeciles and dangerous lunatics can be used, who have hitherto been cast aside as the refuse of society.

GEORG CHRISTOPH LICHTENBERG, 1775



Of all Prussia's neighbours, the Russian Empire is the most dangerous, both by reason of its might, and because of its position. Those who rule Prussia after me will have reason enough to remain friends with these barbarians.

FREDERICK THE GREAT, King of Prussia, 1740-1786



I shudder at the thought of war, for we shall feel it in every corner of Germany. FRIEDRICH SCHILLER, 15 April, 1790

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These madmen are to be converted only by setting their minds in a whirl, and they will never stir unless they catch sight of carnion.

FRIEDRICH HÖLDERLIN, 1770-1843



Such a singular change has come over the Germans that it will be more difficult than ever to teach them how to value certain qualities which they do not possess. There is in this people a curious blend of originality and imitativeness.

WOLFGANG GOETHE, 1801



It is strange that Germany was never able to win fortune by force of arms.

FRIEDRICH SCHILLER, 1801



The worthless will rule with cunning and the noble will fall into their net.

WOLFGANG GOETHE, 1804



Every State comes to ruin which is a treadmill, so that its citizens only move their legs, without being able to climb its steps.

JEAN PAUL RICHTER, 1808



Our fate will come upon us even as we deserve. We shall perish shamefully; for we cannot deny the fact that the nation is as bad as its government.

COUNT NEITHARDT VON GNEISENAU, 1811



I very much doubt whether, should great changes come about, of whatever kind, people (in Germany) would show courage, endurance, obedience, and so forth. . . . The Northern brutality of the people does not admit of the upwelling of passion, of abandonment to an emotion or an opinion. It is a miserable race.

FREIHERR VOM STEIN, 1811

The Writing on the Wall

Fate will cast us (Germans) aside. Great and small will again behave miserably; a few individuals will sacrifice themselves and perish; the scoundrelly survivors will rejoice and traduce them.

FREIHERR VOM STEIN, 1811

What can these conceited, self-seeking, half-learned fellows (in Germany) do but cloak and palliate the vulgarity of their ideas and their behaviour with metaphysical jargon? They will be mocked and kicked aside, and they deserve no better.

FREIHERR VOM STEIN, 1811



We (in Germany) have long been accustomed to gaze only westward, anticipating danger only from that quarter; but the world extends far to the eastward also.

WOLFGANG GOETHE, 1813



The most essential thing to be done with a view to preserving peace in Germany is to make an end of the empire of despotism, and to found and inaugurate a realm with a legal constitution.

FREIHERR VOM STEIN, 1819



One cannot get away from the fact that so long as this race of narrow-minded, recreant, despicable creatures, who have erstwhile most cheerfully lain in the deepest abyss of shame and disgrace and abjection, and who, being seized by the revolving wheel, have been hoisted on high, there, in all their pitiful arrogance, to experience nothing but despondency and dismay and deathly terror: so long as these malefactors stand at the head of affairs no salvation can be expected, and no fortunate planet will shine upon Germany.

JOSEPH GOERRES, 2 October, 1819

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But even though in England I am a Radical, and in Italy a Carbonari, yet in Germany I am not among the demagogues, from the wholly trivial and fortuitous circumstances that if the latter were to be victorious some thousands of Jewish throats would be cut—and precisely the most valuable.

HEINRICH HEINE, 2 February, 1823



If peace continues, the imposition of discipline in Germany will become even more unendurable, and don't you believe anyone who tells you the contrary; it will prove that I am right.

LUDWIG BÖRNE, 3 October, 1830

In ten years from now the amateurs of political antiquities will be coming to Germany from all the countries on earth, in order to indulge their dilettante passion. I can see them already, their *Antiquités de l'Allemagne* in their hands, their spectacles on their noses, their note-books in their pockets, wandering through our cities, peering, fingering, measuring and discussing our legal system, our floggings, our censorship, our custom-houses, our aristocratic pride, our bourgeois subservience, our "all-highest" personages—and our lowest; our guilds and corporations, our coercion of the Jews, and the poverty of our peasants; handing our poor devils a pourboire, and going off to publish descriptions of our misery, complete with engravings. Unhappy people! . . . a Beduin would cry, with proud compassion.

LUDWIG BÖRNE, November 1830

Write and tell me, exactly and circumstantially, whether people in Germany believe that there will be war. According to yesterday's news France and England concluded an offensive and defensive alliance a few days ago. It would be a fine thing if this were true; for then at last we should have what must come sooner or later: the rigid antithesis of the hostile elements: freedom here, despotism there.

LUDWIG BÖRNE, 3 December, 1830 (in Paris)

The Writing on the Wall

In Berlin they have banned Rotteck's *History of the World*. Oh, the time will come when they will ban all Histories of the World, and prohibit three of the seasons.

LUDWIG BÖRNE, 1831

One day the German people will be avenged; its liberty will be won, but its honour never. For help will come not from itself, but from other peoples.

LUDWIG BÖRNE, 14 December, 1832

The despotism in Germany will daily become more Oriental.

LUDWIG BÖRNE, 21 January, 1833



You pay millions . . . to a handful of people to whose arbitrary will your life and property are abandoned. You are nothing, you have nothing! You enjoy no rights. You must go whither your insatiable oppressors require of you, and bear whatever burden they pile upon you. Far as a tyrant can see both land and people decay. But as the prophet writes, so ere long will it be with Germany: the day of resurrection will not fail.

GEORG BÜCHNER, 1834

The German nation is a body, and you are a member of this body. When the Lord shall give you His sign through the men through whom He shall lead the nations from servitude to liberty, then do you rise, and the whole body will rise with you. You have cowered for long years in the thorny acres of serfdom; then you shall sweat a summer long in the vineyards of freedom, and you shall be free, even to the thousandth member. A lifetime long you tilled the soil; then you shall dig your tyrants a grave. You built fortresses; then you shall overthrow them and build the home of liberty. Then you shall baptize your children freely with the water of life. And until the Lord calls you through His messengers by His signs, you shall watch and arm yourselves in spirit,

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and you yourselves shall pray, and teach your children to pray: "Lord, break the rods of our taskmasters, and may Thy kingdom come to us—the kingdom of justice. Amen."

GEORG BÜCHNER, 1834



In the beer-cellar of Göttingen I used to marvel at the thoroughness with which my Old German friends prepared the list of proscriptions against the day when they would gain the mastery. Anyone who was derived even at the seventh remove from a Frenchman, a Jew, or a Slav was condemned to exile. But whosoever had written the least thing against Jahn, or had in any way criticized the Old German absurdities, might prepare himself for death, and for death by the axe, not by the guillotine, although this was originally a German invention, which was already well known in the Middle Ages under the name of "the foreign fall-trap." I remember in this connection that it was quite seriously debated whether a certain Berlin author, who had spoken unfavourably of gymnastics in the first volume of his work, ought already to be included in the list of proscriptions; for the last volume of his book had not yet appeared, and in this last volume the author might possibly say things which would give quite a different significance to the incriminating utterances.

HEINRICH HEINE, 1839

It is our pride that loyal are we,
As oak or linden staunch and sound;
In the land of oak and linden tree
Never a Brutus shall be found.

HEINRICH HEINE, 1844



It is now clear even to the stupidest that to set Germany free is to set her free from herself. She has no use for herself.

DR. POLLIO (Nuremberg), 1843

The Writing on the Wall

For thousands of years they have ruled and abused their power. The Germans have no understanding of humanism and civic liberty. Even when they staged a great insurrection, thirty years ago, and conquered the greatest tyrant of the centuries, their rising was merely a religious war. They fought, as always, for a mediaeval cause.

DR. POLLIO (Nuremberg), 1843



The German patriots, from the oldest of the Old Teutons to the youngest of the Christian Germans, are assailants of the French Revolution and German philosophy; the education and liberation of all human beings would fill them with absolute horror.

ARNOLD RUGE, 1846



Only famine and pestilence are lacking, the world is losing its centre of gravity, and all is falling into confusion, and no Prussian gendarmerie can prevent it.

HOFFMANN VON FALLERSLEBEN, 25 September, 1846



It is possible that the German will one day vanish from the stage of the world, for he has all the qualities which might enable him to win to heaven, but not a single quality which would enable him to assert himself on earth, and all nations hate him. . . .

FRIEDRICH HEBBEL, 4 January, 1860



One has to know the whole of Germany; to know a part only is dangerous. It is the case of the tree whose leaves and fruits are antidotes to each other.

HEINRICH HEINE (Literary remains, 1869)



For practical as for ethical reasons, the present state of the Germans is less desirable than their condition in the days

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when they were still divided into many fragments, and were accustomed to confess their inferiority. Precisely because they readily admitted the superior merits of other nations, they succeeded, in many instances, in acquiring for themselves, by conscientious effort, the advantages denied them by nature. Precisely for this reason, like a diligent race of bees, in all times and from all the peoples, they garnered the honey from the flowery meads of the human spirit. It was precisely for this that they were Germans; and who should seek to persuade them that they have nothing more to learn from other peoples is doing them no service.

EMIL DU BOIS-REYMOND, 1878



We (the Germans) are a moribund omnium-gatherum.

RICHARD WAGNER, 1880



Those who have taken the greatest pains to cling to Christianity, and to uphold it, and have been most efficient in destroying it, are precisely the Germans. It seems as though the Germans do not understand the nature of a Church.

FRIEDRICH NIETZSCHE, 1882

All true Germans go abroad: *for modern Germany is a Slavic outpost, and is preparing the way to a Pan-Slavic Europe.*

FRIEDRICH NIETZSCHE, 1882-1888

“Deutschland, Deutschland über Alles” is perhaps the silliest watchword that has ever been given. Why Germany, in any case, I ask: if she does not desire and represent and demonstrate something of greater value than anything represented by any other Power which has hitherto existed?

FRIEDRICH NIETZSCHE, 1882-1888

The Writing on the Wall

There is a singular prescience in our old national mythus, that so often as things go well with the Germans, whenever a national renaissance makes its appearance, then, always, a Loki is not lacking, who finds his Hodur, whom he skilfully induces to slay the German renaissance : that is, to outvote it.

OTTO VON BISMARCK, 1885



For my part, I look for the Dark Continent where the “slaves” have to be freed in the vicinity of the North Germans.

FRIEDRICH NIETZSCHE, 1888



In Posen and West Prussia, the German element is constantly diminishing. But the Germanization of this region is for us a matter of life and death, owing to the position of Berlin, and the eventual necessity of annexing the country as far as the Vistula.

COUNT ANTON MONTES, 16 November, 1891

The patriot must actually hide his head. The clear-sighted man perceives the abyss toward which we are hastening, but he can do nothing to alter the situation.

COUNT ANTON MONTES, 4 June, 1897



In the immediate neighbourhood of the Kaiser all personages of any importance have really been turned into slaves. Will not people be seriously startled and disappointed if one day, in difficult times, they demean themselves more or less as slaves?

COUNT ROBERT ZEDLITZ-TRÜTZSCHLER, 1903

Among us, today, of course, people refuse to perceive any trace of corruption, and consent to see only excellence. How dangerous, how Pharisaical!

COUNT ROBERT ZEDLITZ-TRÜTZSCHLER, March 1905

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I cannot think of Poland without profound discomfort, indeed, not without dismay. I would rather be a Pole myself, co-operating with enthusiasm in the renaissance of this people, than be forced thus to look on from outside at the tragedy of its dishonour and weakness.

CHRISTIAN MORGERNSTERN, 1907



We have not much to win by a war in Europe. We could not do with more Slav and French elements and fragments of territory. By the forcible incorporation of small countries we should only strengthen the centrifugal tendencies which, unfortunately, are not wanting in Germany as things are now.

PRINCE BÜLOW, 11 October, 1908

We have nothing at all to win by a war. Only a fool can envisage a forcible annexation of the Danes, Swiss, Dutch, and Belgians. An extension of the Empire eastwards is no less dangerous. *We have enough Poles already*, more than enough, within the black and white frontier posts.

PRINCE BÜLOW, July 1909



But you who believe that you can influence us in any way by "truth": *Lasciate ogni speranza!* Only bitter experience and disappointment could have any effect in Germany.

COUNT ROBERT ZEDLITZ-TRÜTZSCHLER, 30 March, 1910

Our education, our institutions and our manner of viewing things engender or favour place-hunting. Place-hunting leads to Byzantinism, and this leads only to a natural despotism. But despotism, for any country, means, sooner or later, weakness.

COUNT ROBERT ZEDLITZ-TRÜTZSCHLER, 14 May, 1910

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It is true that we have driven the world out of its Paradise.

MAX SCHELER, 1917



Was the American Ambassador Gerard right when he wrote, a year ago, in his pernicious book, *Face to Face with Kaiserism*: "The nerve of Germany will break. There is a suicide point in the German character"?

PRINCE BÜLOW, 7 October, 1918



Anyone who twenty years hence enters the Germany that he once knew as one of the most flourishing countries on earth will sink to the ground with shame and grief.

WALTER RATHENAU, 21 December, 1918



Germany, speaking the old language in new garments, tolerating the old spokesmen in posts of importance, will not be understood by the outer world. She will again be dreaded. Her military machine has broken down. But is not the Western world now threatened with the poison-germs from the Republic of the Soviets, which is seeking to emulate Germany in the planning and mobilization of its imperial resources?

MAXIMILIAN HARDEN, December 1918



In its manifold divisions, encompassed by the ocean, Europe will always produce the highest spiritual values if her many and closely juxtaposed individual cultures are able to develop in freedom and mutually fertilize one another. Germany stands and falls with Europe, and Europe with Germany. It is therefore in the most essential interest of Germany to ensure that the nations of the European continent remain absolutely free, and therefore productive.

ALFRED VON TIRPITZ, 1919

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Germany will be saved when she refuses to tolerate anti-semitism, for only then—in a temporal, not in a causal sense—will the dawn of the nation become visible.

FRIEDRICH SIEBURG, 1919



It is quite unnecessary that our enemies should continue to plot against us; we are destroying ourselves quickly enough.

PAUL ERNST, 1921



We are a volcanic people: time and time again the incandescent stream spurts upwards from the subterranean furnace, and congeals into crystalline peaks. By this internal constitution we can explain the catastrophic nature of our history. . . . But from this it follows also that all attempts to bring us to a state of constant equilibrium must fail, because they are contrary to our inmost nature. Only a complete commixture of German with alien blood could alter that; and it was only through this commixture that England became the mighty representative of civilization.

HANS W. FISCHER, 1921

The real Germany cannot be civilized. Who wishes to accomplish that must hand it over to alien Powers.

HANS W. FISCHER, 1921

It must be understood that what for other people may mean life and continuity may mean death to Germany: transition to a state which would cost all that is best in her. In no other people does civilization instantly assume such unsympathetic forms. We cannot adapt it to ourselves, but if we accept it we have to surrender ourselves completely. We have had the most detestable militarism in the world; for when the German is unfaithful to his own nature he becomes obediently subservient and tyrannical.

HANS W. FISCHER, 1921

The Writing on the Wall

We have come to the turning-point at which it must be decided whether we are always to remain this childish people, a people that takes its future lightly until it perhaps no longer has a future.

MÖLLER VAN DEN BRUCK, 1922

Over the German nation lies a spell which it seems that only the lapse of time, only the dying out of the still responsible generation, the death of every individual belonging to it, can gradually lift from us.

MÖLLER VAN DEN BRUCK, 1922



Not by blind enthusiasm are peoples and States created or saved from destruction, whether today or in the primeval German forests.

OSWALD SPENGLER, 26 February, 1929



Against whom will the popular insurrection, so often prophesied in Germany, turn? Who will determine its direction? Well, the extreme Right and the extreme Left wing will meet anti-capitalism on the way, and will unite with the slogan: "Down with the Jews!"

ARTHUR LANDSBERGER, 1925

A people like the Germans will always be like a ball in the hand of a skilful player who is clever enough to exploit its mentality. No great intellect is required. Intellect, in the last resort, is an obstacle.

ARTHUR LANDSBERGER, 1925



The strongest incitement to war is a defenceless neighbour.

GENERAL VON SEECKT, 1929



As for the political methods of the German people, it should suffice to point to the fact that Germany has never stretched

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out her hand toward the peninsula of Jutland, whose possession would be of inestimable importance for the control of the two seas, and also for the consolidation of German supremacy. What other nation would have acted with such moderation!

JULIUS BINDER, 1929



Again and again when a people seemed fated to go under, there have been heroes who, in those days of shame, have overthrown the tyrants and set up the banners of courage, ready self-sacrifice, and virile action in the place of servility, cowardice and subjection.

CAPTAIN ERNST ROEHM, July 1933



It may be that we already stand on the verge of the second World War, the disposition of the Powers, the military, economic and revolutionary means and aims being unknown and not to be foreseen.

OSWALD SPENGLER, July 1933

I am speaking here of Germany, which is more profoundly threatened than any other country in the storm of circumstance: whose *existence* is at stake, in the most terrifying sense of the word. What shortsightedness, what noisy superficiality are ruling here, what provincial points of view emerge when the greatest problems are debated!

OSWALD SPENGLER, 1933

The nation of poets and thinkers, in process of becoming a nation of boasters and persecutors!

OSWALD SPENGLER, 1933



The mysterious aristocratic-German love and hatred and longing for the East is not yet extinguished.

WERNER HEGEMANN, 1934

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In these hot May days of the year 1934 a bitter struggle is being enacted behind the smoothly-painted façade of the Hitler régime; a struggle whose outcome is, at the moment, still doubtful, but whose open outbreak might settle the situation in Germany in the space of a few hours.

DR. OTTO STRASSER, 20 May, 1934



No nation can suffer the incessant insurrection from below if it wishes to meet the assize of history. Sooner or later the movement must come to an end, sooner or later a firm social structure must emerge, held together by the incorruptible administration of justice and the undisputed power of the State. An eternal dynamic is never constructive. Germany must not become a train starting at random, of which no one can say when it will stop.

FRANZ VON PAPEN, 17 June, 1934 (Speech at Marburg)



Political adversaries there have always been and always will be. But even between political adversaries the law of truth and good faith must prevail—and so it did until recently in the German world. If it is to do so no longer, if men believe that the aim can hallow any means, the end will inevitably be a terrible disaster, which must be described not as an Austrian, but as a truly national disaster.

DR. KURT VON SCHUSCHNIGG, October 1934



Help! An unprecedented catastrophe is approaching! Save us! We are drifting toward a world war! But so far it has occurred to no one that such a frightful situation cannot be merely the will of Providence. People are still wasting time and energy on pitiful attempts to treat some partial difficulty, that imposes itself for a moment—for example, Germany's claim to equal armaments—as a *Ding an sich* to be "solved"

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as a separate problem; and to "solve" it in accordance with its momentary aspect. People refuse to realize that it is only a momentary phase in an evolutionary process whose direction is determined by certain ideas.

LEOPOLD SCHWARZSCHILD, 1934



The Germans have come forward too late with their claim to political hegemony. Today they can no longer conquer the world with this claim, but can only lay it waste.

ERICH KÄHLER, 1937



No nation on earth is today so little in a mood for war, so wholly and utterly incapable of enduring war, as this (German nation). Intellectually impoverished and degraded, morally empty, inwardly rent, profoundly distrusting its Führer and all that he and it have undertaken together during the last few years, profoundly uneasy in itself, unwittingly indeed, but full of dismal forebodings, it would enter upon this war, not in the situation of 1914, but, even in a physical sense, in that of 1917, of 1918.

THOMAS MANN, 1937

Woe to the nation which, because it no longer knows where to turn, in the end actually seeks escape in the horrors of war, abhorred by God and man! It would be a lost nation. It will suffer a defeat from which it will never recover.

THOMAS MANN, 1937

God help our saddened and misused country, and teach it to make its peace with the world and with itself!

THOMAS MANN, 1937

II

The German Peril

The Germans are a thoroughly vindictive people, who are a terror to all other nations. No adventure, no mischief will give them pause; they will dare all hazards.

SEBASTIAN FRANK, 1531



Are not the traces of our wrath
On every strand, on every path?
Where has not flowed our German blood?
But not to the German's honour; nay,
 to his shame and scathe!

JOHANN PETER UZ, 1720-1796



The pitiful thing about these German Governments is that they stagger about blind and deaf and immune to all experience and drag the peoples with them to destruction.

JOSEPH GOERRES, 10 February, 1816



Is not Germany Europe's ice-cellar? Does not every rambling nation have the Germans applied to its head like a cold compress?

LUDWIG BÖRNE, 1826

Throughout Europe all the enemies of liberty turn their hopeful gaze towards Germany. LUDWIG BÖRNE, 1834

Well, if I go through the whole of German history I note that the Germans have little talent for civic liberty; that on

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the contrary they have always been ready to embrace servitude, whether in theory or in practice, and they are very successful in teaching others to accept this condition, not only at home, but also in foreign countries. The Germans were always the *Ludi magistri* of slavery, and when blind obedience had to be beaten into men's bodies or minds a German drill-sergeant was chosen. And so we have propagated slavery in all parts of Europe, and as memorials of this deluge dynasties of German princes are sitting upon all the thrones of Europe, just as the petrified relics of sea-monsters are found on the highest mountains, remainders from the inundations of antiquity. And even now, no sooner does a nation become free than it is given a German thrashing.

LUDWIG BÖRNE (in conversations with Heine)



The Germans are a dangerous people; they have a genius for intoxicating themselves.

FRIEDRICH NIETZSCHE, 1882-1888

The Germans, as camp-followers, are missing the great progress of European culture.

FRIEDRICH NIETZSCHE, 1882-1888

The German himself is not, he is *becoming*, he is "evolving." "Evolution" is therefore the essentially German discovery in the great realm of philosophic formulae—a ruling concept, which is co-operating with German beer and German music to Germanize all Europe.

FRIEDRICH NIETZSCHE, 1885

The Aryan influence has corrupted the whole world.

FRIEDRICH NIETZSCHE, 1887

The profound and chilly distrust which the German awakens so soon as he reaches a position of power—even to-day—is

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the subsequent reaction of the ineradicable horror with which Europe, century after century, beheld the raging of the blond Germanic beast.

FRIEDRICH NIETZSCHE, 1887

Wherever Germany's influence extends it is corrupting civilization.

FRIEDRICH NIETZSCHE, 1887

The Germans cheated Europe of the last great cultural harvest to be gathered by Europe—that of the Renaissance.

FRIEDRICH NIETZSCHE, 1888

For a thousand years they have confused and entangled everything they have touched, and half—or three-quarters!—of the maladies from which Europe is suffering are on their conscience.

FRIEDRICH NIETZSCHE, 1888



For nearly a hundred years Germany has been a witches' cauldron, a focus of contagion.

CARL STERNHEIM, 1920

This, for the time being, is Germany's most sinister rôle; in their dread of her all her neighbours are exasperated and seduced into acquiring her own infamous mentality. Europe is the pupil of the German in respect of rancour, and all the baser mechanical instincts, and is brought up for examination before her sergeant-schoolmaster; and it is devoutly to be hoped that she will break his head.

CARL STERNHEIM, 1920



The spirit which today has the impudence to figure as the spirit of the German nation is by origin and by nature the spirit of the German colonists in the East, who first depopulated provinces with fire and sword, and then settled them; that unintellectual and violent "Christianizing" spirit

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which the younger sons of German noble families exploited to their economic advantage, when they sought, with every circumstance of violence, to exterminate whole tribes, or to "convert"—that is, to subject them.

ARNOLD ZWEIG, 1921



The uncritical fashion in which the German people surrenders to any leadership, the ever-seething metaphysical libido which makes it so receptive of pseudo-philosophies, are dangers of the first rank. They are dangerous to itself and dangerous to the world. LEOPOLD SCHWARZSCHILD, 1934



Between the German world and Europe a profound and peculiar relation exists. This nation, in the heart of the continent, qualified both internally and externally, by its geographical and its historical destiny, to be the unifying, reconciling element of this region of the globe, thereby realizing the concept of "Europe," has on the contrary been an element of division and unrest, a substance which Europe has been unable to assimilate. ERICH KAHLER, 1937

In Germany today we have the violent reaction against failures at home and uncontrolled power abroad, and what in the Kaiser's Empire was still naïve and unconscious, as an involuntary concomitant of lively place-hunting, has now become, in the Third Reich, a conscious and deliberate turning against Europe, an unscrupulous and barely concealed self-seeking, which if need be is quite content to wreck the whole continent. ERICH KAHLER, 1937



Nothing in the terrible revolutionary events of the present day can in any way alter the fact that National Socialism is

The German Peril

the legitimate child of the true Bolshevism, and that in the long run the present rule of Hitler's system of terrorism, and the fanaticism of the National Socialist philosophy, must lead to the absolute collapse of German civilization, and consequently, will most seriously imperil the peace and the cultural life of Europe.

EDGAR ALEXANDER, 1937

III

Historical

In a body politic so artificially organized as the German, both now and in the past, the hand of despotism must needs accomplish the most incalculable devastation.

FRIEDRICH SCHILLER, 1791-1793

Formerly the German Empire enjoyed the equivocal privilege of being only its own enemy and remaining unconquerable from without.

FRIEDRICH SCHILLER, 1791-1793



On the 30 December, 1797, the day on which Mainz was surrendered, at 3 o'clock in the afternoon, there died at Regensburg, at the ripe age of 955 years, 5 months and 28 days, gently and blessedly, in a state of complete inanition, complicated by apoplexy, in full consciousness, and with the administration of all the holy sacraments, the Roman Empire of ponderous memory. The deceased was born at Verdun in June 842 (843). When he first saw the light on earth there blazed at the zenith a long-haired comet, pregnant with misfortune.

JOSEPH GOERRES, 1798



We have no history, no climate, no national society, no Vanity Fair, and we are not at liberty to say what else we have not.

LUDWIG BÖRNE, 1786-1837

German history is like an unbound volume; so irksome and tedious is it to read. One often has to turn the pages upside

Historical

down, one loses the connection, and the title and index are not seldom concealed in the middle of the book.

LUDWIG BÖRNE, 1829-1834



Because the German Empire was rotten and lethargic, and because the Germans had fallen away from God and from liberty, God has allowed the Empire to fall asunder. For a season “He has given the angels of Satan power,” so that they smite Germany with their fists; “He has given power to principalities and powers and the rulers of the darkness of this world” (Ephes. vi.) so that they have afflicted the burgess and the peasant, and have sucked their blood, and they work their wicked will upon all who love righteousness and liberty better than wickedness and slavery.

GEORG BÜCHNER, 1834



German History as Tragedy

What a Tower of Babel is here to rebuke us for tragical deeds!

And verily much has occurred: how is it that nought has been done?

AUGUST COUNT VON PLATEN-HALLERMÜNDE, 1834



Our cosmopolitanism is after all conditioned by the artless course followed by our history; but in what did this artless course originate, save in the constitution of our own nature? And this will always remain the same!

FRIEDRICH HEBBEL, 1839-1840

It is very true that we Germans are not in harmony with the history of our nation. But what is the reason? It is because this history was *ineffectual*, without result; because

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we cannot regard ourselves as the products of its organic progress, as are the English and the French, for example; because what we must, it is true, call our history, is not the story of our life but the history of our sickness.

FRIEDRICH HEBBEL, 1843



I like neither our rude forefathers nor the aftermath of their rudeness. What we are told of the Popes and Kaisers is almost Byzantine, and to see their tombs and their barbaric faces, their torture-chambers and their fortresses, now fills me with utter aversion.

ARNOLD RUGE, 1846

The gloomy land and the brutal nation of the Germans needed a thousand years to acquire a certain measure of enlightenment: if not political, at least religious.

ARNOLD RUGE, 1846



Art thou a Briton, thou art by the alien as Briton respected;
Art thou a Frenchman, thou art as a Frenchman esteemed;
Art thou a German, thou must as thyself win respect of thy
fellows:

Only for thee has thy history done nothing whatever.

FRIEDRICH HEBBEL, 1848



It is the distinguishing mark of our nation that the power of evolving by its own efforts has always been denied to it.

THEODOR MOMMSEN, 1885



The delight which the German takes in a narrow-minded policy is unbelievable.

FREIHERR VON ROTENHAN (Under-Secretary of State),
21 July, 1897

Historical

We must not forget the lessons of German history. The tragic fate of German history is its lack of continuity. Treitschke was in the right when he spoke of the few bright moments in our history, of the glories of the German Empire that passed away like a midsummer night's dream. We in Germany look back upon no such simple and uninterrupted evolution as France, when Thiers, in February 1871, speaking in the National Assembly at Bordeaux, in what for the French was a black hour, referred consolingly to "the wonderful unity of French history"; or as England, where the descendants of the statesmen who shaped the history of the country under Queen Elizabeth and King William III are still governing the country today, and where these men conduct affairs in accordance with the same standpoint and by almost the same means as did their forefathers. We, in view of our often warped and calamitous history, should never overlook the danger of relapse.

PRINCE BÜLOW, 1897



It was not the war that gave rise to the hatred against Germany, but the hatred which had long smouldered everywhere, though it did not find open expression—hatred of the German character in all its manifestations—did at least create among the nations the psychic disposition, the state of mind, which in the national leaders made the declaration of war possible, though not necessary.

MAX SCHELER, 1917



That tendency to self-destruction which runs like a streak of blood through the thousand years of our history.

ALFRED VON TIRPITZ, 1919



The German always has to cover the whole road again; there is no German tradition, no German evolution, but always only the present. All other nations show plainly the

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stratification in their structure; they build themselves up slowly, step by step, once the crisis of birth is overcome. Germany goes from collapse to collapse, from resurrection to resurrection.

HANS W. FISCHER, 1921



It seems to me that the one political gift which we are denied is moderation. We are too prone to go to extremes. For this reason our history proceeds by fits and starts. The tradition and continuity which determine the development and the history of other great nations are lacking.

PRINCE BÜLOW, 1921-1926

The fate of the German people, the fate of our fatherland, is and remains one of the greatest tragedies of world history.

PRINCE BÜLOW, 1921-1926



Our history has gone astray. We are no longer getting on in the world; it was the same yesterday as today; and if only we look back, we have not been getting on for more than a generation.

MÖLLER VAN DEN BRUCK, 1922

It was really as though we wanted to make the old proverb come true: when the good God wants to destroy the Germans he finds a German to do the job.

MÖLLER VAN DEN BRUCK, 1922

German history has been full of addenda which have afterwards appeared to be by-paths. It is from these addenda that our conflicts have resulted—and are still resulting.

MÖLLER VAN DEN BRUCK, 1922

We never achieved a purpose. We all attained our ends, if we ever had any, always only in an approximate, temporary, fitful fashion. And if we did for once succeed in reaching the

Historical

point we had intended to reach, it was only to fall even more thoroughly and abysmally short of our goal.

MÖLLER VAN DEN BRUCK, 1922

The conflicts which have accompanied our history are still quivering. Indeed, the oldest, which we had thought was quite extinct, are coming to life again today.

MÖLLER VAN DEN BRUCK, 1922



Even today the historical expert often sees the outcome of the war for Germany as a mere matter of the loss of provinces, of colonial activities, of State and national possessions. He often overlooks the most grievous loss which Germany has suffered. This most grievous loss, in my opinion, is that the intellectual and industrial middle class, which was by tradition the politically-minded class, paid for its complete devotion to the State in the war with the complete surrender of its fortune, and became proletarianized.

GUSTAV STRESEMANN, 1927



Startling though the notion may seem to us, we must clearly understand that we fought the war on wrong lines; that we were not psychologically prepared for such a monstrously *many-sided* conduct of the war. But our enemy knew very well that the war could be waged and won only with military and moral and economic and industrial and psychological weapons.

EWALD BANSE, 1932



For two thousand years our people has always been attended by this changeful destiny. Over and over again it has climbed only to fall. The reasons were always the same. The German, self-absorbed, at variance within himself, divided in will, and therefore impotent to act, is without the energy to assert his

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own life. He dreams of justice in the stars and loses his footing on the earth.

ADOLF HITLER, March 1933. (Speech at Potsdam)



Our past avenges itself: these 700 years of pitiful, provincial narrowness of mind, without a breath of greatness, without ideas, without aim. This cannot be made up for in two generations.

OSWALD SPENGLER, 1933

All the other great nations have acquired a character by virtue of the *past*. We learned nothing from our past, and we have therefore to awaken, unfold and educate the character that lies like a germ in our blood.

OSWALD SPENGLER, July 1933



All the realms founded by the German people wrestled with the dynamic forces at work in them, and seldom allowed the static elements of the State to take firm root in the soil of political creation.

HERMANN STEGEMANN, 1934



The last hundred years of our history have set an ineradicable stamp upon us: the concept of patriotism means nothing to us unless it is connected with military activity and the victorious conquest of power; just as the Frenchman was long unable to conceive of himself independently of the glory of his nation. . . . For three generations the German patriot has been simply the man who has cast overboard everything that is other than the nation and extends beyond the narrow concept of nationalism.

HERMANN RAUSCHNING, 1938

IV

The Reformation

Christ said: "Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them that despitefully use you and persecute you, that ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven." Yet not only did I find no one who desired to follow this command of Christ, but everyone did precisely the contrary. Everywhere the artisans hated one another. Many a lord oppressed his faithful servants and subjects; on the other hand, many subjects were rogues in the service of their pious lords. The tradesfolk and the craftsmen vied with one another like so many Jews, practising usury, and by all means of cunning and over-reaching they stripped the peasant of what he had won by sweat and toil; on the other hand, even the peasants were so godless that they were quite capable, if their wickedness did not bring them profit enough, of damaging other people, or even their own lords, by evil rumours, under the semblance of simplicity.

HANS JAKOB CHRISTOFFEL VON GRIMMELSHAUSEN, 1669

Next to pride and avarice, with all their honourable followers, were gorging and swilling, and among the wealthy the loosest living was an every-day matter; but what seemed to me the most terrible thing of all was this abomination, that many folk, and especially soldier lads, in whom the vices are not as a rule very severely punished, do no more than make a jest of their godlessness and of the holy will of God.

HANS JAKOB CHRISTOFFEL VON GRIMMELSHAUSEN, 1669

German versus Hun

The Thirty Years War has done Germany more harm than the outer world believes.

FREDERICK THE GREAT, 8 September, 1775



The Reformation was the wasting sickness of which German liberty died. A few thousand thinkers won the right of free thought, and the whole country lost its liberty of life. The nation was the poorer by a dream, and the country was the richer by a thousand follies excogitated by the German theologians and philosophers.

LUDWIG BÖRNE, 1834

Luther deprived the people of Paradise and left it Hell, deprived it of hope and left it fear. The German people, formerly so joyous, witty and child-like, were transformed by the Reformation into a dismal, lumpish, tedious people. German life is a Lenten existence which has continued already for three hundred years, and the German people is still far from its Easter.

LUDWIG BÖRNE, 1834

Luther did much harm to his country. Before him the Germans knew only servitude; to this Luther added servility.

LUDWIG BÖRNE, 29 April, 1835



In England the Reformation was the work of love, in songful France the work of a street-ballad, and in Germany the work —of egotism.

KARL JULIUS WEBER, 1832-1840



"That 2 and 5 are equal to 7," said Luther, "you can grasp with your reason; but if Authority says: 2 and 5 are 8, you must believe it against your knowledge and your perception." By virtue of this servile sermon Luther is the true inventor of the doctrine of blind obedience.

JOHANNES SCHERR, 1850

The Reformation

Luther set Germany in a turmoil, but Francis Drake soothed her again: he gave us the potato.

HEINRICH HEINE (*Literary Remains*, 1869)



Here and there one can see, with alarming distinctness, the farce enacted by fortune; how in a few days, in one place, in accordance with the circumstances and opinions of a single person, she will set up the tight-rope on which she intends the next few centuries to dance. So it was with the destinies of our modern German history during the days of that disputation at Regensburg; the peaceful settlement of ecclesiastical and moral problems seemed accomplished, without a war of religion, without a counter-reformation, and the unity of the German nation assured; the mild and profound wisdom of Cardinal Contarini hovered for a moment victoriously above the theological squabbings, as the representative of the riper Italian piety, which reflected the rosy dawn of intellectual liberty. But Luther's bony head, full of suspicions and superstitious fears, rebelled: because justification by grace seemed to him his greatest discovery and watchword, he would not believe this proposition on the lips of the Italians; while the latter, as we know, had originated it much earlier, and in perfect tranquillity had spread it throughout Italy. Luther saw in this apparent agreement the wiles of the devil, and did his utmost to hinder the cause of peace: whereby he did much to forward the intentions of the enemies of the Empire.

FRIEDRICH NIETZSCHE, 1878



The immoral doctrine of passive obedience sucked the marrow from the will of the Lutherans.

HEINRICH VON TREITSCHE, 1886

(As a result of the Lutheran Reformation) the nation relapsed into theological squabbles and the coarse debauchery of an idle peace.

HEINRICH VON TREITSCHKE, 1896

German versus Hun

The German people was not prostrated by the Thirty Years War, but the war resulted because it was so prostrated.

EGON FRIEDELL, 1928



When we consider that Leonardo da Vinci (thirty-one years older than Luther) was a free and entirely modern human being, and yet had long been dead when Luther, tormented by fears, was still indefatigably wrestling with the devil, and the other dismal chimerae conjured up by his brain, we begin to see how terribly backward were Germany's unintellectual nobles, and her equally retrograde and ignoble clerics, at a time when they wanted to reform the world, as compared with the intellectual aristocracy of more cultured lands.

WERNER HEGEMANN, 1934

V

Revolution

And Germany? I do not know. Shall we at last put our oak forests to the proper use—namely, to throw up barricades for the liberation of the world? Shall we, to whom Nature has vouchsafed such thoughtfulness, such energy, such courage, at last make use of our God-given faculties and understand, proclaim and fulfil the word of the great Master, the doctrine of the rights of humanity?

HEINRICH HEINE, 1830



A German revolution would seem a terrible thing, even to me. These people simply do not know what they want, and this is the most perilous state of affairs. They would be capable of massacring one another over the dot of an i.

LUDWIG BÖRNE, December 1830



Even after a revolution we fall to our knees before the rich man and the noble, and these latter take good care that we do not emancipate ourselves. We are and always shall be a good-natured, loyal, passive people—but not a political people; we ought to use our reason a little, but we fall silent as soon as anyone says: “Don’t argue!”—and we are dumb, and fall a-trembling, as at a harsh “Who goes there?” in the silence of midnight.

KARL JULIUS WEBER, 1832–1840



Even in the event of a revolution the Germans would try to fight only for freedom from taxation, never for freedom of thought.

FRIEDRICH HEBBEL, 1836

German versus Hun

We Germans, of course, are reflective beings, given to pondering and hair-splitting; we haven't it in us to make revolutions, and we don't ever dream of doing so if only others are so kind as to keep us in a moderately good temper. We have not the elemental passion, the initiative, we are not ready to spring into action. JOHANNES SCHERR, 1880



Ugh, how German it is, this German revolution! How empty and pedantic, without enthusiasm, or brilliance, or greatness! ROSA LUXEMBURG (Murdered 15 January, 1919)



We have not been able so to influence the revolution as to make it seem that Germany is inspired by a new spirit. The inmost nature of German culture, and the quality of our social life, seem to have suffered but little alteration. In many respects they have not changed for the better. . . . I believe that the verdict of history on us who are in the Government—as on the National Assembly—will be harsh and bitter.

REICHSWIRTSCHAFTSMINISTER WISSEL, 14 June, 1919



The German Revolution was absolutely humdrum; it was without heat or fire, was utterly vulgar. It neither cared for appearances nor had any use for enthusiasm.

PRINCE BÜLOW, 1921-1926



The English have two revolutions behind them: one religious, one glorious; the French have theirs. Both nations are older than we. They are tried and experienced and their men are thoroughbred. Their revolutions have made them politically-minded nations. They succeeded in making their national upheavals the political basis of their subsequent evolution.

MÖLLER VAN DEN BRUCK, 1922

Revolution

Even as revolutionaries we are still a Wilhelmine people: a dictatorial people, who no longer profess to be romantic; a tumultuous and inadequate people, whose morbid self-consciousness is at once arrogant and pusillanimous.

MÖLLER VAN DEN BRUCK, 1922

The German Revolution was the work of Liberals, not of revolutionaries. That was a disaster.

MÖLLER VAN DEN BRUCK, 1922

The genius of the German people is not revolutionary. It is not even liberal. It is conservative.

MÖLLER VAN DEN BRUCK, 1922



Only when the German people is stricken with inhuman destitution and misery does the longing awake in it for a *new* insurrection and a *new* life.

ADOLF HITLER, 21 March, 1933
(Garrison Church, Potsdam)



The new leaders (of the Weimar Republic) did practically nothing to prove to the outer world that Germany had changed, but they did everything to persuade the inner world that things were not so bad after all. In continual conflict with their radical fellows, who were aiming at a socialist State, they sought union with the old world, looked back with more pride than they felt when they looked forward, and allowed all socialistic measures to be swallowed up by commissions.

EMIL LUDWIG, 1934

That March day of 1848 has never been forgotten, for on that day there was fighting. A constitution which collapses after 14 years is regretted, but is not celebrated in song unless it has great excellence. Its lack of vitality was

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explicable by its languid conception, between fear and exhaustion. If it had been born of battle and sacrifice, of hatred and passion, the German Republic would have come by a different end.

EMIL LUDWIG, 1934



The German people can point to no great revolution in its history. Nowhere in the rubbish-heap which the centuries have left behind them does the skull of a king lie mouldering.

RUDOLF OLDEN, 1935

VI

State, Government, Politics

The basest are now the counsellors of the realm; if they have not the needful cunning, then alas! the only counsel they give is to twist all things by idle lying.

WALTER VON DER VOGELWEIDE, 1229



Germany is like a fine, lusty stallion, that has fodder and all things needful in plenty; only one thing he has not—a rider.

MARTIN LUTHER, 1566



Germany versus Germany

As iron itself engenders rust that eats it all away,
We Germans have engendered that which lays us waste today.

FRIEDRICH VON LOGAU, 1604-1655



Who freedom has and justice a fatherland doth own,
But we to such a land and it to us are now unknown.

DANIEL VON CZEJKO, 1605-1656



Our state still lacks internal strength.

FREDERICK THE GREAT, 1752



People are always repeating the mistaken lament: "We have no fatherland, no patriotism." If we find a place in the world where we can instal ourselves with our possessions, a

German versus Hun

field to nourish us, and a house to cover us, have we not then
a fatherland?

WOLFGANG GOETHE, 1771



The German Empire is a mighty realm if one considers the host of its kings, electors and princes. It is feeble if we consider the conflicting interests that cause division among the princes.

FREDERICK THE GREAT, 1775



Here at home republican liberty is a meaningless sound, an empty name. No Roman blood flows in the veins of the people of the Palatinate.

FRIEDRICH SCHILLER, 5 May, 1784



Germany? But where does it lie? I cannot find the country.
—Where learning begins politics leave off.

WOLFGANG GOETHE, 1796

We have never been of political consequence.

WOLFGANG GOETHE, 7 October, 1807



The general discontent in Germany has loosened the bonds which united the princes and their subjects; it regards them either as cowardly fugitives, who, thinking only of their own security, seek to save themselves by flight, deaf to all the requirements of honour and duty; or slave-drivers and subordinate governors, who lead a beggarly and uncertain existence at the cost of their subjects' life and property.

FREIHERR VOM STEIN, 1808



There is no help for it, and probably it will always be so: the ship is abandoned to the waves.

DAVID VON SCHARNHORST, 2 March, 1809

State, Government, Politics

Since this accursed war began we have always been lagging behind with the measures we have taken. With the efforts we are making today we should have been victorious three months ago : and with those that we shall make three months hence (if we then make any) we should be victorious today.

HEINRICH VON KLEIST, 1809



Flabbiness, egoism, avarice, Nordic apathy and superficiality were our guides and counsellors.

FREIHERR VOM STEIN, 1811



It would not make much difference whether a French marshal, who would at least have known, formerly, the inspiring visions of liberty, or an inflated German noble, brutal and mannerless, were to rule our part of Germany.

JOHANN GOTTLIEB FICHTE, 1817



I do not believe that any other nation has such a passion for moving backwards as the German.

WOLFGANG GOETHE, 13 November, 1813



A people without fatherland, a constitution without unity, princes without character and intellect, a nobility without pride and energy.

JOSEPH GOERRES, May 1814



Nowadays it is almost impossible to write about any party without offending two parties.

JEAN PAUL FR. RICHTER, 1817



The principal cause of the ferment in Germany is found in the number of our princes and governments. They are the

German versus Hun

real Jacobins . . . they excite and maintain discontent and bitterness, they hinder the evolution and progress of the human intellect and character, and they favour the anarchists by preparing the way for a general disintegration.

FREIHERR VOM STEIN, 1817



To the Germans the lengthy discussion of national affairs resembles not the necessarily continuous breathing of a free and wholesome spirit, but the groans of a contracted breast, betraying its oppression, and distressing as a symptom of disease. The complaints of the public speakers, which skim over the surface of the general situation, seem to the Germans merely the mould which has formed upon our corrupted institutions, and they fill him with dismay, as the result of putrefaction.

LUDWIG BÖRNE, 1818

The German people is still insufficiently enlightened in respect of political affairs. It does not realize that thunder-clouds are dangerous until lightning has struck the house.

LUDWIG BÖRNE, 1819



One word more as to the newer German nationalism. Humanity in the mass has from all times been united only by prejudices, and aroused by passions; so that even the best purpose is always obscured and often postponed.

WOLFGANG GOETHE, 1819



It is the nature of the Germans to derive everything from self-seeking. Because they know by experience that no amount of talking has any effect on their countrymen, they imagine that every intelligent person must know this, and if despite this he talks he must be doing so for his own selfish ends.

LUDWIG BÖRNE, 1821

State, Government, Politics

That Frederick the Great preferred to ignore the Germans naturally annoyed them, and they did their utmost to impress him with their importance.

WOLFGANG GOETHE, 1827-1830



In Germany political truths are not passed from hand to hand like current coin, so that they become soiled and worn; no, they lie peacefully and tidily in the cupboard, unused, and even untouched. A wonderful country, in which men are born old and die young! With the wisdom of our grandfathers we come into the world, and we leave behind us, without increasing it, the wisdom of our grandfathers.

LUDWIG BÖRNE, 1828



Charles XII was imprudent enough to ride into Dresden in order to visit his enemy the Elector. On the following day he heard that an extraordinary council was convened in Dresden. "Note well," he said, "they are deliberating as to what they ought to have done yesterday." Is not this national trait of the Germans still perceptible a hundred years later?

KARL JULIUS WEBER, 1832-1840



If I had nothing to do with what has been happening, and if I have nothing to do with what will perhaps happen, this is because I do not share the delusion of those who regard the Germans as a people prepared to fight for its rights.

GEORG BÜCHNER, 1833



How is a poor German political prisoner treated in jail? With humanity? Or is he tortured? Who can tell? If he is at

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last released, his prolonged sufferings have often shattered his mind, or in his burning prayers for salvation he may have vowed to Heaven that if they released him he would forgive all his enemies and forget every wrong: he is silent and uncomplaining. Perhaps he has even been made to take an oath of silence as the price of his liberation.

LUDWIG BÖRNE, 10 March, 1833



I am retiring from politics. Let our Fatherland find another fool.

HEINRICH HEINE, 4 March, 1834

Their eyes are dry but sad as death.
They sit at the loom and gnash their teeth.
We are weaving thy shroud, O Germany!
A threefold curse we weave for thee,
 We weave, we weave!

A curse on God, to whom we plead
In winter's cold and hunger's need.
We have endured and hoped in vain:
He has mocked and fooled us again and again.
 We weave, we weave!

A curse on the king, the king of the great
Who would not pity our wretched fate;
Who bled us all of our last poor groat
And had us shot like dogs in the moat.
 We weave, we weave.

A curse to the fatherland we give
Where only shame and dishonour thrive;
Where flowers but half unfolded fail,
Where mould and dry-rot the worm regale—
 We weave, we weave!

State, Government, Politics

The shuttle flies, and creaks the loom.
Day and night we weave in the gloom.
Weaving thy shroud, we still rehearse
And weave in the warp the threefold curse.

We weave, we weave!

HEINRICH HEINE, 1840-1855



No life for me after this without liberty! So long as the oppression continues under which I see my fatherland sighing my indignant heart will bleed.

FERDINAND FREILIGRATH, May 1844



From these few conversations I have realized the confusion and disorder in the highest circles and have seen how every popular wish that is not in harmony with the views of the government is regarded as a crime against the State.

PRINCE CHLODWIG ZU HOHENLOHE-SCHILLINGSFÜRST, 1845



German patriotism was from the very beginning directed against the future, against the revolution, and against France, the land of revolution. It comes from Russia. Its midwife is the national religiosity of the Russians, their devout submissiveness.

ARNOLD RUGE, 1846



Anyone who objectively considers our speeches, our actions, our thoughts and feelings of the last twenty or thirty years, must admit that our interest in politics was predominantly philosophical, poetical, rhetorical: that realities, and practical problems, and the end-results of political life, were of less importance to us than recourse to something over which we could philosophize and declaim in a witty and enthu-

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siastic manner, working ourselves up into moods of lyrical extravagance.

OTTO LUDWIG, 1846-1859



Who wishes to rule Germany must conquer her.

PRINCE WILHELM (Kaiser Wilhelm I), 1849



People whose whole store of learning, examined in the light of reason, consists very often of the most pitiful, rubbishy jargon, regard themselves as the chosen vessels of all wisdom, and they only too often exert an unwholesome influence on the destiny of our country, because good Germans have an unreflecting respect for pedantry, especially if it obtrudes itself with the proper degree of brazen arrogance.

JOHANNES SCHERR, 1850



I wonder if we still have diplomats in whom the courage to think, the ambition really to accomplish something, is not already extinct.

OTTO VON BISMARCK, 1857

We are the most good-natured and harmless of politicians, yet no one really trusts us.

OTTO VON BISMARCK, 1857

We are a conceited people; we become irritable if we cannot be boasting, and we think highly of a government that makes us look important in the outside world, and we allow it to make great demands on us, even on our purses.

OTTO VON BISMARCK, 1857



It is regrettable, of course, that in our political life we have not gentlemen to deal with; but this is a conception with which we are quite unacquainted.

PRINCE CHLODWIG ZU HOHENLOHE-SCHILLINGSFÜRST, 1862

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I am, however, astonished by the political incapacity of our Chambers, and yet we are a very highly educated country: doubtless too highly educated; other countries are certainly not more intelligent . . . but they have not that childish self-confidence with which our people expose their impotent nakedness as the pattern of what should be.

OTTO VON BISMARCK, 1862

The tendency toward enthusiasm for foreign nationalities and national endeavours, even when these can be realized only at the cost of our own fatherland, is a form of political malady whose geographical distribution is unfortunately restricted to Germany.

OTTO VON BISMARCK, 1863



Justice is the foundation of States: that is an old saying, which is not accepted in Germany. And the same may be said of veracity.

PAUL ANTON DE LAGARDE, 1875

If we inquire into the nature of German nationality today, we are asking, what is the German ideal today? There is no answer to this question, for such an ideal does not exist.

PAUL ANTON DE LAGARDE, 1875



Germany has become the breeding-place of historical optimism.

FRIEDRICH NIETZSCHE, 1875



It seems that we shall never be great politicians.

RICHARD WAGNER, 1879



Every German passes through a phase in which he is a zealous politician and writes an historical drama. For such activity nothing is needed beyond the courage to make phrases.

PAUL HEYSE, 1885

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The terrible extirpation of independent opinion which Bismarck has perpetrated among us is of course the cause, or one of the principal causes, of all the disadvantages of our present position. But are we not at least as guilty as Bismarck himself?

MAX WEBER, 1887



I, the last anti-political German!

FRIEDRICH NIETZSCHE, 1888



As my intimate enemy Pope Pius IX has truly said, the Germans, since they have scarcely outgrown the political nursery, cannot accustom themselves to regard politics as a science of the possible.

OTTO VON BISMARCK, 1890



Twelve separate parties you will see
Where a dozen Germans be:
And if they talk, as talk they will,
They'll be divided further still.

DANIEL SANDERS, 1892



We Germans in our alliance are like a married pair; when all is quiet and peaceful one quarrels a little, just as husband and wife do; but if a neighbour interferes husband and wife fall upon him together.

OTTO VON BISMARCK, 1893



With reference to the internal political situation in Germany I should like to recall a saying of Count Eugen Kinsky. When someone asked him what the Vienna Government would probably do at a critical moment he replied: "What is the silliest thing you can think of?"

COUNT ANTON MONTS, 4 June, 1897

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I know of no country where the general national feeling and the love for the fatherland as a whole offer so little obstruction to the excesses of party passion as with us.

OTTO VON BISMARCK, 1898

The supposedly apocryphal saying which Plutarch attributes to Caesar, that he would rather be first in a wretched mountain hamlet than second in Rome, has always impressed me as a genuinely German idea. Only too many of us in public life think thus, and look for the little hamlet.

OTTO VON BISMARCK, 1898

A State whose government is in the hands of the covetous, the *novarum rerum cupidi*, and the orators, who are better able than others to deceive the uncritical masses, will always be condemned to a perturbation of its evolutionary path which so ponderous a mass as a political community cannot suffer without serious injury to its organism.

OTTO VON BISMARCK, 1898



The art of speech is so little developed and practised in Germany, political talent is so rare, our political temperament so lethargic, that every Parliamentary debate peters out on the second day.

DR. JOHANNES VON MIQUEL

(Prussian Minister of Finance, 1890-1901)



When one considers how urgently all our social problems and social needs are knocking at the door, and how important it is that we should understand our period better, and learn how to keep step with it, one may well shudder on reflecting how much of the plunder buried by us these two hundred years past will have to be brought out of the lumber-room.

COUNT ROBERT ZEDLITZ-TRÜTZSCHLER, 1903

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This self-advertisement and this indirect flattery, as though there had been *only* successes under the government of our Kaiser, amounts to actual deception. Thus some time ago the Kaiser was greatly delighted because someone told him that in Kadinen he had a cow that yielded 68 pints of milk daily. That this was sheer nonsense must be obvious to anyone who knows anything of farming. But the example of the 68-pint cow is very characteristic of our present situation.

COUNT ROBERT ZEDLITZ-TRÜTZSCHLER, 1904



When a high official, Boisguilbert, in 1697, made the celebrated statement: "One regards France, from the standpoint of our Crown, as an enemy country," he fell into disgrace with Louis XIV; but that was all! Imagine the consequences if a Court official of our modern Prussia dared to say such a thing! In the first place, such things do not happen; in the second, if it did, what disciplinary punishment would be great enough to atone for the statement?

KARL BLEIBTREU, 1904

Bismarck's victory meant the paralysis of all German idealism, all the higher intellectual powers and moral impulses, the victory of Byzantine place-hunting, and of the old corporal's stick, the resuscitation of the "police State," and the foundation of a militarism whose comprehensiveness, and whose poisonous influence on all the arteries of the nation, were unprecedented in history.

KARL BLEIBTREU, 1904



Perhaps it is because I have lived so long abroad that I do not grow used to the fact that people cut one another in society if they have had a political argument or if they differ in their political or economic ideals. I hope that in this respect we shall grow more tactful, and reach a stage of civility which was long ago attained by other nations. In

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England, of course, people are not so little-minded as to carry political differences into the sphere of personal relations.

PRINCE BÜLOW, 16 June, 1906

I might say, once for all, that Prince Bismarck's habit of dogmatic statement became not only a mania, but a sheer calamity. His errors are a positive affliction to us. Here is a striking example of our German tendency to systematize everything.

PRINCE BÜLOW, 14 November, 1906

Here in Germany we have all grown too nervous—left and right, above and below.

PRINCE BÜLOW, 14 November, 1906



And it is a rabble like this that one has to rule. They are absolutely not ripe for a constitution.

KAISER WILHELM II, 1907



Not only our officials, but even our Parliamentarians are unlike those of England, Italy and France. Our national representatives are commonplace, narrow-minded fellows.

PRINCE FRANZ ARENBERG, *d.* 1907



The Germans are the most learned and also the most warlike people on earth. We have distinguished ourselves in all the arts and sciences; the greatest philosophers, the greatest poets and musicians, are German, and of late years we have been first in the natural sciences and in almost all technical departments, and our commerce is enormously increased. Can you then be surprised that we are political donkeys? There is bound to be a snag somewhere.

FRIEDRICH ALTHOFF, *d.* 1908

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The Kaiser is *primus inter pares*, but in Munich he writes : "Sic voleo, sic jubeo," and he often acts accordingly. Here the German princes ought to have intervened long ago ; but they have absolutely refused.

COUNT ROBERT ZEDLITZ-TRÜTZSCHLER, January 1909



The political immaturity of the Germans is holding festival as usual.

ADOLF WILBRANDT, 1910



The blind industry of our German policy has had an unsuspected result : Britain and France, Britain and Russia are united in hatred.

MAXIMILIAN HARDEN, 30 December, 1911



I have suffered and am still suffering from the fact that our whole policy during the last few years was nonsensical, and that the leaders of the Empire—apart from His Majesty—were and are absolutely ineffectual.

ALFRED VON TIRPITZ, 13 November, 1914



Our policy is reminiscent of King Canute, who sat on the shore and bade the tide halt before it reached his feet. It was not his fault they got wet, but that of the tide. It ought to have stopped in time.

PRINCE LICHTNOWSKY, 1915



Before anything else we were and are militarists, because it pleases us to live in such a way and not otherwise.

MAX SCHELER, 1917



People displayed a tendency to abuse the authority of Parliament; they jingled the sabre, and brought on the most

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serious domestic crisis which has occurred since the foundation of the Empire—and still felt confident that some way out would surely be discovered by those in high places.

PRINCE MAX OF BADEN, 1917



Even a Parliamentary system in Germany would be, after all—just a German Parliamentary system. For example, the German people would never understand or suffer that a civilian should be Minister for War or stand at the head of the Admiralty.

GUSTAV STRESEMANN, 1917



I thought to arrive at five minutes to twelve and I was summoned at five minutes after twelve.

PRINCE MAX OF BADEN, 1918



People complain of the lack of political capacity in Germany. But how should anyone be able to cook if he is never allowed in the kitchen, if he receives only ready-cooked food, which he is obliged to eat whether he likes it or not?

PRINCE LICHNOWSKY, 1918

Despite mutual disapproval, our bonzes were in complete agreement on one point: to show a closed front to anyone who should arouse their suspicion that he might imperil their comfort and their authority by the possession of a little more talent and the power of independent judgment.

PRINCE LICHNOWSKY, 1918

Our foreign policy was directed alternately by pathological and oenological thinkers.

PRINCE LICHNOWSKY, 1918



Among us, in the old days, the high official and the nation were two different entities, between which there was no con-

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nexion. But when in England the workers were unwilling to work any longer, when the production of munitions came to a standstill, the Minister of Labour went to the miners, spoke to them, and incited them to renewed effort; and because they saw the Minister before them in the flesh, because he met them as man to man, a very different output was obtained than would be possible here, where the *Norddeutsche Allegemeine Zeitung* was employed when the government wished to appeal to the nation at large.

GUSTAV STRESEMANN, 1918



It is not true that the Kaiser alone was guilty. The whole nation is guilty, in that for these thirty years it was not only silent when one able man after another, who had raised his voice in admonition and warning, was compelled to "shake the dust from his feet," but it actually applauded his every gesture, however foolish, and imitated the fashion of his moustache, and was not content with shouting "Hoch!" when an imperial toast was given and an imperial indiscretion disgraced us before all the world, but invariably gave three cheers.

MAXIMILIAN HARDEN, December 1918



Even the Romans were able to base their policy on the internal discord of the Germans.

ALFRED VON TIRPITZ, 1919

This inherited tendency of the Germans, to regard everything from the standpoint of party politics!

ALFRED VON TIRPITZ, 1919

The old German State has grown weak and infirm, thanks to a period of mediocrity in the midst of extreme peril.

ALFRED VON TIRPITZ, 1919

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It is perhaps not correct to say that post-Bismarckian Germany had no men of independent character. Nevertheless, Haldane correctly described the tragedy that dogged our work when after his visit in 1912 he said (or so I have been told) that he was struck by the absence of men of character in Berlin, as compared with an earlier period. The almost religious devotion to the monarchy which the personality of Wilhelm I had evoked did not prevent the free expression of opinion, or limit the manifestations of character, but under the influence of the Cabinet this devotion gradually gave place to mere obedience.

ALFRED VON TIRPITZ, 1919

As far as Germany was concerned the menacing factor was not the will to war, but only the disastrous mediocrity of the politicians then in office. ALFRED VON TIRPITZ, 1919

In the hands of bad and unskilful leaders the German people is its own greatest enemy. ALFRED VON TIRPITZ, 1919

The German offends in respect of national exuberance only because as an incorrigible political illusionist he wavers to and fro between the two extremes of the dread of power and intoxication with power. ALFRED VON TIRPITZ, 1919



I had the feeling that the diplomatic vocation makes demands upon us Germans which are alien to our nation.

PAUL VON HINDENBURG, 1919

The German did not give evidence that he was so far politically educated that he would have been in a position to rule himself. He had to express his thoughts, no matter how disastrous they might be at the moment. He felt that he must gratify his vanity by letting the whole world know what he knew and what he felt. This defect has done us greater injury

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in the great struggle for our national existence than any military disasters.

PAUL VON HINDENBURG, 1919



You cannot form any conception of the state of affairs in Berlin. The White Terror is raging there as fiercely as ever it did under the Tsarist régime. While even under the Socialist Laws the rulers at least sought to preserve the semblance of justice, today we are ruled quite openly by brutal violence. Disregarding the few protective regulations, the soldiers—Government troops—enter the dwelling-houses at night, brandishing their weapons, make arrests without warrant, and search the rooms without orders from the magistrate or public prosecutor. Landsberg, Ebert, Scheidemann, who profess to be the guardians of legality, allow the soldiery, whom they have recruited from among the ex-officers and non-commissioned officers and younger sons of the bourgeoisie, to do precisely as they will. No good can come of this.

HUGO HAASE, 16 January, 1919

The history of the human race is still as always a tale of bloodshed and cruelty. All refined and sensitive natures must be overcome with horror, and goaded to rebellion; or they feel benumbed and are driven to despair. I am telling you nothing of the reign of terror which we in Berlin have experienced. Those who shrieked most furiously against the Bolshevik terror have committed or tolerated the most horrible excesses, which, if they had been reported as occurring in Petersburg or Moscow, would have raised an outcry from the so-called civilized world.

HUGO HAASE, 23 January, 1919



The gods, who laid in the cradle of our nation so many great and fine and virtuous qualities, failed to endow it with the political faculty.

PRINCE BÜLOW, 1921-1926

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There is a baseness of character which is possible only in Germany.

PRINCE BÜLOW, 1921-1926

Treitschke was right: there are vilenesses to which party hatred descends only in Germany.

PRINCE BÜLOW, 1921-1926

It was of old a defect of the German people that they would become impassioned only in respect of alien interests, and form emotional judgements of incidents occurring beyond our frontiers, instead of gauging them solely by the cold measuring-rod of German interests.

PRINCE BÜLOW, 1921-1926

The itch to increase their possessions and the greedy appetite for territory have for centuries been the mark of all the German princes and dynasties, and shortly before their collapse they flickered up again, not only in the West, but in the East also, when Courland, Finland and Lithuania tempted the covetous.

PRINCE BÜLOW, 1921-1926

Because in the years of the emergence of the German Empire, in a time when the jealousy, distrust and hatred of our growing power, and our increasing prosperity, were by no means so great as they have since become, Prince Bismarck, with his peculiar and resourceful ingenuity, took advantage of the differences between the other Great Powers, many Germans believed that *Duobus litigantibus, tertius gaudet* must be the aim and motive of Germany policy. . . . The unpolitical sons of Teut became more and more prone to this mistake.

PRINCE BÜLOW, 1921-1926

In a country where party spirit so greatly outweighs the political sense and regard for political interests as in Germany, it is always a serious matter when a party can no longer find anything with which to reproach a Minister.

PRINCE BÜLOW, 1921-1926

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It is not given to the Germans, as it is to the French, the Italians and the English, to judge every statesman who has deserved well of his country, and who has played his part in public life, by his good qualities rather than by his failings, by his successes rather than by his failures, and so to give him his due place in the national museum. With us criticism is often predominant; a criticism which is still oftener excessively petty and narrow-minded and prejudiced.

PRINCE BÜLOW, 1921-1926

Consider the usual German custom of carrying political differences into the personal sphere—a deplorable habit which in England, France, Italy and other civilized countries is unintelligible to any educated person.

PRINCE BÜLOW, 1921-1926

I have often thought how differently many things would have come to pass in Germany if Prince Bismarck, in dealing with his adversaries, had sometimes shown them the man instead of the ruthless political antagonist. . . . Even so, of course, there would have been political conflicts, but they would not have been so hateful, would not have been inspired by such venom as has so often been the case in Germany.

PRINCE BÜLOW, 1921-1926

Undoubtedly a fairly personal defect of political judgement in Germany is the habit of referring back the events and problems of the day to altogether too remote causes. This is not unconnected with the German's tendency to a fundamental and sometimes pedantic way of looking at things, and with the inclination to soar into a high-flown order of ideas.

This tendency was to our detriment during the world war. A French writer satirized this mania rather neatly: when after Sedan, Thiers asked Leopold von Ranke, with whom he had long been on terms of friendship, against whom the

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Germans were fighting after the fall of Napoleon III, the German historian wittily replied: "Against Louis XIV." It was true that the Roi Soleil, in his day, took advantage of the then weakness of the German Empire, in order to wrest Alsace from Germany. And what was the cause of this weakness? The Thirty Years War. And why was the Thirty Years War fought? It was a consequence of the Reformation. And what was the cause of the Reformation? It was a phase in the history of Christianity. And why had Christ to come to earth? In order to redeem humanity from the Fall. "Thus," the article concluded, "according to the methods of German historical science the world war must be referred back to the fact that our worthy ancestress Eve bit the apple. Without Eve, without the apple, no ultimatum, no war."

PRINCE BÜLOW, 1921-1926

In the old days a picture might be seen in the veterinary colleges which represented the skeleton of a horse. Above the picture was the inscription: "The Sick Horse." On the skeleton all the maladies from which an unfortunate nag can suffer were represented in pictorial form, from thrush to glanders. In the school for politicians a special course ought to be organized, which would show the pupils, by the mistakes made by German policy in the summer of 1914, just what diplomatists ought not to do.

PRINCE BÜLOW, 1921-1926

We had lost the war diplomatically before the first shot was fired.

PRINCE BÜLOW, 1921-1926



If I were to take my stand in the middle of Unter den Linden and shout: "Long live the great old days, long live Bismarck, long live Kaiser and Empire, long live glorious Prussia, long live the old Army!" I should perhaps be arrested, but apart from a few loafers the men would gaze at me with emotion,

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and the women would kiss their hands to me. But if I were to cry: "Long live the Republic!" they would all laugh. For us Germans there is something banal, almost ridiculous, about the Republic.

WALTER RATHENAU, Spring, 1922



Parliament remains the talking-shop of the politicians instead of the place where things are done.

MÖLLER VAN DEN BRUCK, 1922

We left it to other nations to elaborate political ideas. . . . As a result we are suffering from a romanticism which we felt that we owed to our traditional idealism. Indeed, we exaggerated it until it became an imperialism, but this, with us, was not really born of an ideal: it was rather the exhibitionism of the incontestable power which was piling itself up in our empire.

MÖLLER VAN DEN BRUCK, 1922

We were always talking largely of our achievements in the world, but as for the world-policy which we deduced from them, we followed it merely as dilettanti, who do everything by halves, inadequately and inconsequently.

MÖLLER VAN DEN BRUCK, 1922

We never find the word that expresses a political affair with refined political tact, and we always talk beside the point.

MÖLLER VAN DEN BRUCK, 1922

We were originally a democratic people.

MÖLLER VAN DEN BRUCK, 1922

We occupied ourselves with suffrage problems for a century. In the end we no longer asked ourselves whether there might be political ideals which we could not realize by means of the existing suffrage. We wanted the suffrage for its own sake;

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with the natural consequences. We admired nothing exceptional, but only average results, and were less than average.

MÖLLER VAN DEN BRUCK, 1922

The concentration on domestic policy is now as always our national vice.

MÖLLER VAN DEN BRUCK, 1922



Even the first successor of the great Chancellor (General von Caprivi) said in the Reichstag, when he was attacked: "I stand here at the command of my all-highest Master, and I shall conduct affairs in accordance with his wishes as long as I possess his confidence and am commanded to do so." A sergeant who has been told off to defend an outpost can use such language, but not the highest responsible official of the Empire. Why did Parliament and the nation tolerate such an unconstitutional speech?

COUNT ROBERT ZEDLITZ-TRÜTZSCHLER, 1923

To what extent the nation also is guilty of this state of affairs is shown by a trifling incident that occurred in connection with the Reichstag debates in November 1908. When the report of the speeches was forwarded to the Kaiser at Donaueschingen he was absolutely beside himself. He shed tears, and for some days he thought of abdication. From Donaueschingen he went to Baden-Baden in order to meet the Kaiserin. Of course, the people there had read the speeches, and anxiety was felt as to their attitude. As always, the streets were full of people standing shoulder to shoulder, and the cheering and enthusiasm were greater even than usual. Thereupon the Kaiser remarked: "There, one can see that these speeches in the Reichstag are mere vanity and self-importance: my good people understand me, and I have them all behind me to the last man." By such unrestrained applause the people unconsciously exerted an enormous influence over the private moods of Wilhelm II. There was

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a certain amount of slavish subservience about us, and this is why destiny has rewarded us the lot of slaves.

COUNT ROBERT ZEDLITZ-TRÜTZSCHLER, May 1923

Monarchy or republic, the governing power must assuredly be strong enough to preserve peace and order, but never so strong as it has been with us, for then the outcome, sooner or later, will be tragic and unhappy.

COUNT ROBERT ZEDLITZ-TRÜTZSCHLER, May 1923



In Germany the Conservative ideal seems incapable of making itself politically self-supporting; the result being that the political ideal, in this land of subjects, is merely a matter of police regulations, a network of prescriptions, and the numbering and control of the subject population. One need only compare the Conservative policy of England with what passes by that name in Prussia in order to observe the descent from a great political ideal to an absolute absurdity.

FRANZ BLEI, 1924



We Germans can only with difficulty accustom ourselves to regard politics, not as the expression of emotions, but as an art; because our past gave us no opportunity of experimenting.

OSWALD SPENGLER, 1924

It is hardly fifty years since we Germans entered the ranks of the world powers, and we are by no means accustomed as yet to adopting, as a matter of course, the views and opinions appropriate to this position; we have suddenly become provincial again, and this in a degree which would be impossible to any other great nation, if only for geographical reasons.

OSWALD SPENGLER, 26 February, 1924

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Since the war nationalist politics has been conceived as a sort of intoxication. OSWALD SPENGLER, 26 February, 1924

A narrow-minded form of national conceit has sprung up which regards it as no less beneath its dignity to observe the state of affairs in foreign countries, when seeking the solution of domestic problems, than to take seriously, as affecting ourselves, the historical and economic development of the world about us. What is not in line with our own ideology, or does not seem to be in line with it, is treated with scorn, or ignored, or is deliberately misunderstood.

OSWALD SPENGLER, 26 February, 1924

Today, when I go through the streets of our German cities, and see the sort of meetings and processions that are held there, the sort of posters that are stuck on the walls of the houses, and the sort of tokens that are worn, and hear the childish theories that take the place of economic facts, and note all the things that people do and say with the utmost publicity—things that in other countries would first be thoroughly studied with the greatest reserve, in the light of world politics, and then consigned to silence—I could well despair.

OSWALD SPENGLER, 26 February, 1924



In what other country would a statesman who was never a general exhibit himself in the uniform of a curassier? Can one imagine a statue representing Cavour, or Gortschakov, or even Disraeli, as a curassier?

PRINCE LICHNOWSKY, 1927



Before the war the Emperor was loud, swaggering, aggressive, showy, because there is an element in the German character that is all these things, and admires them. He was narrow in his outlook, bigoted in his sympathies, intolerant

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in his attitude to foreign nations, because the Prussian spirit in Germany is all these things. The Prussian loves to ride roughshod over others and thinks he has a right to do so. It suits them all now to blame the Emperor for these things and to call it Hohenzollernism. Hohenzollernism is only Prussianism in the open. They say its spirit has (with the Emperor) completely disappeared. It may be so, but I for one think that sudden national conversions are as rare and unsatisfactory as sudden individual conversions.

DAISY PRINCESS OF PLESS, 1928



The Swedish Chancellor Oxenstierna, who asked the sagacious question: "An nescis, mi fili, quantilla prudentia regatur orbis?" "But do you not know, my son, with how little intelligence the world is governed?"—seems to have found even this modest quantum lacking in the German constitution, for he described it as a mere confusion maintained by Providence: and two hundred years later Hegel spoke even more plainly, calling it a "constituted anarchy."

EGON FRIEDELL, 1928



The Wilhelmine monarchy did not perish because as an ideal it was old and obsolete. . . . The monarchy fell when there was no one left to fight for it, and if need be, to die for it. Wilhelm II did not lose his throne because in the twentieth century this throne was merely an anachronism: it was no more of an anachronism than the Weimar Republic, and perhaps less. He lost everything because he was no longer willing to risk everything for it. The crown of the German empire rolled in the dust because its latest wearer no longer had the resolution to defend the crown in accordance with the law by which his ancestors conquered it.

DR. JOSEPH GOEBBELS, *Der Angriff*, 19 August, 1929

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We did not know what we wanted and we did not want what we knew.

ERNST VON SALOMON, 1930

(Accomplice in the murder of Rathenau)

Poison, dagger, pistol, bomb seemed the tools of a horde of cold-hearted murderers emerging from the darkness of the German chaos.

ERNST VON SALOMON, 1930



One may even say that actually Wilhelm the Second did in a certain sense perfectly fulfil the duty of a king, inasmuch as he was almost always the expression of the overwhelming majority of his subjects, the protagonist and executor of their ideas, the representative of their conception of the world. Most Germans of the Wilhelmine era were nothing but pocket editions, reduced copies, miniature impressions of the Kaiser Wilhelm.

EGON FRIEDELL, 1931



The lack of political sense in Germany has always had very unfortunate results, and the achievements of individual statesmen of importance are in contrast with the political obtuseness of the nation as a whole, and also of many who are statesmen by profession.

EWALD BANSE, 1932



The great defect of Bismarck's creation was that it did not educate the rising generation for the circumstances of our new form of political life. One saw the new form but did not understand it, and did not inwardly assimilate it, with its horizons, its problems, and its new duties. One did not live with these things. And the average German, then as always, conceived the destiny of his great country from the party and particularist point of view; that is, his ideas were shallow, narrow-minded, stupid, parochial.

OSWALD SPENGLER, 1933

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All parties think and behave as though Germany were alone
in the world.

OSWALD SPENGLER, 1933



The Germans have always been at questionable pains to construct political ideologies. Not only is the German given to producing ideologies, intellectual formulae, and metaphors, even when they are out of place or cannot be verified, but he goes to the utmost extremes in his efforts to realize such logical, intellectual, and effective constructions. Every politico-historical situation is interpreted philosophically as a higher destiny.

EUGEN DIESEL, 1934



The successor to Augustus, the Emperor Tiberius, discovered an effective method of fighting the Germans. It was he who gave the advice: "Leave them to their own internal dissensions."

WERNER HEGEMANN, 1934

On the column of Marcus in Rome is a relief which shows how Germanic "leaders" were beheaded by Germanic soldiers. But the heads of these princes, like those of Hydra, grew again until they were more numerous than ever. Down to the present day there have always been too many leaders and instigators of *querelles allemandes*.

WERNER HEGEMANN, 1934



The estrangement of the German middle classes from politics, which led, before our eyes, to the collapse of the Empire, and then of the Republic, is due not to any innate lack of political talent in the Germans, for they are just as shrewd as other, more political nations, but simply to an atrophy of the organs, the consequence of centuries of disuse.

EMIL LUDWIG, 1934

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And so, since the Germans, with their musical talents, do not readily reckon the cost of a castle in the air, but prefer to sing about it, and since a magician can win the romantic part of their hearts more easily than is possible in the case of other peoples, so the Germans believe what they desire.

EMIL LUDWIG, 1934

Just as the court officials of the Egyptian kings built themselves tombs like their masters, in the form of pyramids, so the Germans copy the pyramid of their military State in a hundred variations. The Platonic idea that hovers before their minds must always be imitated; so they reproduce the pyramid, with the king standing on the apex, in countless reduced facsimiles, from the powerful party to the skittle-club. The solitary stone can have no feelings of its own; only when it becomes a component member of a pyramid, at once supporting pressure and pressing downwards, does life become worth living—a life of service and command.

EMIL LUDWIG, 1934

Inasmuch as the military State was transposed into the Wagnerian realm of myth and magic, it fulfilled at once both categories of the German dream: obedience and music, discipline and devotion, irradiating the twilight world in which, for the Germans, the victory of the good is so readily allied with self-interest. This is the special form of German cant, which is alien to the English form, except that its *coulisses* are not ecclesiastical but heroic, the German hero being a cross between Lohengrin and a lifeguardsman.

EMIL LUDWIG, 1934



One of the cardinal errors which of recent years has been disseminated from a certain quarter, is that in politics there is such a thing as a word of honour which need not be kept.

German versus Hun

This conception leads directly to a political method for which the end justifies even the most reprehensible means.

DR. KURT SCHUSCHNIGG, December 1934



They awakened the ambition of the German people to play the part of a world power, as befitted its material force, and deluded it, by military, political and industrial parades, with the hope of achieving what for centuries had been its secret longing: the hope of becoming a nation, just as the English and the French were nations.

ERICH KAHLER, 1937



That there can be any sort of bridge between politics and morality, between power and justice—that they can have anything in common—is absolutely incredible to the German; such is his contempt for politics, of which he nevertheless makes such jealous demands. To him it is pure, unadulterated devilry—so he decides to be a real devil, and devises, on account of this devilry, a dehumanized “Weltanschauung.”

THOMAS MANN, 1938

It was a Frenchman who coined the aphorism: “When a German wants to be graceful he jumps out of the window.” He does this also when he wants to be political, for he then feels obliged to cast his humanity away.

THOMAS MANN, 1938



While in the Western countries men thought they were fighting for democracy—that is, for life—the specific German fiction was that the Germans were fighting for spiritual ends. Here, I think, we see the peculiar tragedy of the German, and his incomprehensibility for the rest of the world.

CARL ZUCKMAYER, 1938

VII

The Press

This universal nullity (of the German Press), this party enthusiasm for utter mediocrity, this toadyism, these cringing gestures, this emptiness, this impotence!

WOLFGANG GOETHE, 25 July, 1798



I receive letters daily, from all quarters, which are filled with the bitterest complaints that in spite of the unheard-of wretchedness of the Berlin newspapers no one will make up his mind to arrange for the publication of anything better.

DAVID VON SCHARNHORST, 18 March, 1813



Books are the ruin of Germans ; reviews,
and the weeklies and dailies
Bang the big drum so insanely a man
cannot hear himself speak.

WILHELM WAIBLINGER, 1827



The German newspapers, both political and non-political, are with few exceptions quite indescribably insipid. There can be something romantic about poverty, and something touching about beggary ; but the German newspapers reveal only the repulsive nature of poverty and the intolerable aspects of mendicancy.

LUDWIG BÖRNE, 1828

German versus Hun

What the German newspapers are allowed to tell us concerning our domestic affairs is always only the tenth part of the truth.

LUDWIG BÖRNE, 18 September, 1830

In Berlin they are going quite crazy with terror and despair. Recently the *Preussische Staatszeitung* contained a long article in which it was stated that Prussia is really the true republican State; in Prussia the throne is surrounded by republican institutions; France has nothing of the kind; the French ought to be ashamed of being such slaves. . . . What times, and O, what people! And they know perfectly well that they are deceiving nobody, least of all the Prussians themselves! But they so delight in fraud and deception that they reason like this: if among ten million readers there are only ten blockheads who believe us, that is, after all, something gained.

LUDWIG BÖRNE, February 1831

In Germany we follow in the rear of events, and we shall learn of them nothing but what they call back to us over their shoulders. And what do they tell us? If war breaks out the German newspapers, which only stammer unintelligibly at ordinary times, will have their tongues cut out as a measure of precaution.

LUDWIG BÖRNE, 23 March, 1831



The Germans invented gunpowder—all credit to them!—but they have balanced the account by inventing the Press.

FRIEDRICH NIETZSCHE, June 1885



The Press has no courage in this country; it is craven.

OTTO VON BISMARCK, 1890



There is no insanity of which one could not convince the German people by a four months' Press campaign.

ALFRED VON KIDERLEN-WÄCHTER (Minister for Foreign Affairs, 1910–1912)

The Press

The Berlin newspapers are drunk with victory; a frenzy which I always found unpleasant, but which now disgusts me more than ever.

ALFRED VON TIRPITZ, 15 September, 1914



The British public, used to the British Press, with its extremely high standards of honour, probity and decency, has no idea of the malicious vulgarity of many German newspapers considered quite reputable in that country.

DAISY PRINCESS OF PLESS, 1928



No nation of all the many nations of the earth has such extensive experience in the matter of newspaper lies, and the systematic incitement of the population by the newspapers, as the German.

Der Arbeitsmann

(Official organ of the Reichsarbeitsdienst, 1937)

VIII

Prussia

Our troops call for endless diligence on the part of their leader. While discipline is constantly maintained, they have to be cherished with greater care and better fed than perhaps any other European troops.

FREDERICK THE GREAT, 1748

We see at the present time in Prussia dismal examples of avarice and robbery: these are a disgrace to the officials, whose integrity ought to be beyond doubt.

FREDERICK THE GREAT, 1768

This nation is thick-witted and lazy. It is a mass which moves if one pushes it, and lies still if for a moment one suspends one's pushes. Every man knows only what he has learned from his father, and no one wants to know how things are going in other countries.

FREDERICK THE GREAT, 1768

I shudder from head to toe when I think of the Prussian despotism. JOHANN JOACHIM WINCKELMANN, 1717-1768



Let someone appear in Berlin seeking to uplift his voice in favour of the rights of the subject and against capitalism and despotism—and you will soon learn which country has remained, to this present day, the most slavish country in Europe. GOTTHOLD EPHRAIM LESSING, 1769

Prussia

The nobility of Prussia is a burden to the nation, being numerous, for the most part poor, and arrogant in its appetite for salaries, offices, privileges, and advantages of every kind. One result of its poverty is its lack of education, as it has to depend for its training on inefficient military schools, so that it is unfit for the highest offices. . . . This vast number of half-educated human beings constitute, by their encroachments, the greatest burden on their fellow-citizens, in their twofold quality of noblemen and functionaries.

FREIHERR VOM STEIN, 1808

Here (in Prague) we find the people good-natured and obliging—they have not the wolfish look of the Brandenburger or Courlander, who are the worst of the inhabitants of the Prussian State.

FREIHERR VOM STEIN, 1809



I had always despised the Prussians, for they always seemed to me a spiritless and puffed-up people.

JOSEPH GOERRES, May 1814



The compulsion and oppression under which a great part of the subjects had to live, in a state of constant dread, made Prussia the terror and aversion of all other countries; the foreigner avoided any stay in the country, or even the necessity of passing through it.

CHRISTIAN KONRAD WILHELM VON DOHM, 1814-1819



If we are to maintain any sort of order we must destroy Prussia.

FREIHERR VOM STEIN, 17 September, 1812

Set in the place of Prussia whatever you will; dismember it; strengthen Austria by the addition of Silesia and Courland

German versus Hun

and North Germany, and make Austria the master of Germany—I wish it could be so; it is a good plan, if it can be realized.

FRIEHERR VOM STEIN, 1 December, 1812

What can one expect of the inhabitants of this sandy steppe, these sly, heartless, half-educated people, who are really fitted only to become corporals and accountants?

FRIEHERR VOM STEIN, 1757-1838

One cannot describe them (the Prussian nobility) as a knightly, imperial nobility; indeed, one can hardly call them a half-German nobility; they are a hybrid genus, in which there still persists a modicum of some savage and long-extinct antediluvian beast.

FREIHERR VOM STEIN, 1757-1838

Prussia will go under, unregretted and without posthumous glory, and her disappearance will be reckoned a very good thing.

FREIHERR VOM STEIN, 1757-1838



Prussia—always Germany's hearth, whatever goes into the pot, and whoever the cook may be: preparing everything, destroying everything; giving food and poison, warmth and disastrous fire, flame and smoke, heat and ashes.

LUDWIG BÖRNE, 1820

Now they want to put all the civil senior officials in Prussia into uniform. This is the very acme of tyranny: a piece of supreme rascality. By this they want to transform our love for our fatherland into blind obedience. So they enslave the people; so they enslave its guardians; so they enslave all, from the hovel to the throne, from the beggar to the overseer. Tut!—so much circumstance was quite superfluous. The Prussians are good people, docile as sheep.

LUDWIG BÖRNE, 7 February, 1832

Prussia

This Prussia! How well she understands the way to manage her people! She is able to profit even by her revolutionaries. For her State considers the needs of every colour. She can even make use of zebras with tricolour stripes. Thus, of late years she has employed her most frenzied demagogues to preach to one and all that the whole of Germany must become Prussian. Hegel had to justify serfdom; whatever is, is reasonable. Schleiermacher had to protest against liberty, and recommend Christian submission to the will of authority. Atrocious and infuriating is this exploitation of philosophers and theologians, by whose influence they seek to work upon the common people, and who are constrained, by betraying both God and reason, to disgrace themselves in public.

HEINRICH HEINE, 18 October, 1832

I considered with uneasiness this Prussian eagle, and while others praised it for gazing so boldly into the sun, I became the more observant of its talons. I did not trust this Prussia, this lanky, sanctimonious pipeclay-hero with his capacious stomach, his great mouth, and his corporal's staff, which he dips into holy water before he strikes with it. I disliked this philosophical, Christian militarism, this mixture of Berlin beer and lies and sand. Repulsive, profoundly repulsive to me was this Prussia, this stiff, hypocritical, canting Prussia, this Tartuffe among the States.

HEINRICH HEINE, 18 October, 1832



In Prussia learning was praised and favoured so long as it remained frozen; but as soon as it thawed and began to flow it was persecuted with hatred and derision.

LUDWIG BÖRNE, 1834



I despised the ordinary demagogues, and their activities were loathsome to me—to begin with, because they were always

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untimely—but I could now offer the shabbiest rioter my hand if it were a question of repaying Prussia for her infamous trickery and making an end of her handiwork.

HEINRICH HEINE, 28 February, 1842



The love of the Fatherland which was in the hearts of the people could not make way against the arrogance of the officer and the use of the rod. The worst of it was, that people generally believed that things must be so, and could not be otherwise; so that according to the general opinion the people were in full enjoyment of their rights, and this misconception prevented the truth and its justice from emerging.

BISHOP RULEMAN FRIEDRICH EYLERT, 1844

The Prussian Army bore within its breast a moral depravity that ate its way like a cancer, and by its infectious suppuration affected even the sound parts.

BISHOP RULEMAN FRIEDRICH EYLERT, 1844

In the days of the great Frederick people feared the Prussians, and long afterwards they associated the notions of heroism and victory with Prussia. In the country the soldier was everywhere supreme. Prussia was a soldier-State; the higher officers, and at one time the generals, exercised the powers of life and death like sovereigns.

BISHOP RULEMAN FRIEDRICH EYLERT, 1844



Prussia must be brought low and then demolished.

PRINCE FELIX SCHWARZENBERG, 1850



The Prussians are developing an absolutely simian agility.

AUGUST KRAWANI, June 1866

Prussia

Prussia no longer saw, in the right and honour of Austria, in the right and the honour of the whole German nation, a limit to her disastrously exaggerated ambition.

KAISER FRANZ JOSEPH, 21 June, 1866



The right of conquest implies a war in accordance with the principles of the law of nations. Yet never was there such a war between me and the King of Prussia. The incorporation of Hanover is therefore an unworthy usurpation, a criminal and abhorrent theft. I appeal to the aid of all the Powers which have recognized my sovereignty and the independence of my kingdom, and am convinced that they will never allow might to take precedence of right, since such a principle, today applied by Prussia, might in future threaten the life of all monarchies, of all legitimate States.

KING GEORGE OF HANOVER, 23 September, 1866



Even to us, the Prussian-minded South Germans, the specific Prussian character is not pleasing. But as a “political animal” the Prussian is superior to the South German.

DAVID FRIEDRICH STRAUSS, 2 October, 1870



Something contemptuous, cold, indifferent, careless in the voice: that now seems “aristocratic” to the German . . . indeed, the young girls now imitate this officers’ German. For the officer, and especially the Prussian officer, is the inventor of these accents. FRIEDRICH NIETZSCHE, 1882



There is something hollow in the Prussian mentality. It has evolved inwardly from without rather than outwardly from within. JULIUS LANGBEHN, 1890

German versus Hun

In respect of her education and her examination system Disraeli long ago compared Prussia to China. Today our German education, which has been so greatly influenced by the foreign and domestic policy of Prussia, has no intimate accent of its own. Mars was never a friend to the Muses.

JULIUS LANGBEHN, 1890



In the purely Prussian diplomatist . . . I have found, as a rule, an excessive tendency to criticism, to knowing better than others, to opposition, and to personal touchiness.

OTTO VON BISMARCK, 1898

We were already training our officers, up to the rank of regimental commander, with a completeness unknown to other States, but apart from this the native Prussian blood was no more fertile of talent than in the time of Frederick the Great himself.

OTTO VON BISMARCK, 1898

Our most successful generals—Blücher, Gneisenau, Moltke, Goeben—were no native products of Prussia, any more than were Stein, Hardenberg, Motz and Grolman in the civil services. It seems as though our statesmen, like the trees in the forest nurseries, have to be transplanted.

OTTO VON BISMARCK, 1898



Those pigtailed Spartans who were victorious at Leuthen had little enough in common with the military policemen who were thrashed at Jena, and who today, jingling their sabres, as the “upper class,” make Germany unsafe.

KARL BLEIBTREU, 1904

The self-portrait of the national spirit of Germany in Fichte’s immoderate self-glorification of Germanity has hitherto produced, as its only fruit, that new German, or rather Prussian

Prussia

chauvinism, which is prodigiously far removed from all real national virtues of German growth. It is, indeed, as remote from the true German culture as a herd of Gadarene swine, in its stupid militarism, jingo Byzantinism, sly place-hunting, and ferocious profit-making.

KARL BLEIBTREU, 1904



History, and the history of Brandenburg in particular, might teach us that the result of cant and hypocrisy and fanatical virtue was unjust and Pharisaical condemnation, and great unhappiness for many human beings; and the final result was a greater corruption of morals than before.

COUNT ROBERT ZEDLITZ-TRÜTZSCHLER, 29 June, 1908



Prussia must have its pigtail cut off from time to time.

ALFRED VON TIRPITZ, 1919

The Prussian navy had little tradition of its own. . . . We climbed, so to speak, on the British navy.

ALFRED VON TIRPITZ, 1919



Prussian Germany, ever to be more Prussianized, was regarded as the crown and purpose of creation. It was as though the ruling class, by which a wood is valued only for its game and its timber, a human being only as a fellow-ruler or a tool, and the miracle of spring as the promise of harvest, had never drunk in the sunlight in Tasso's Ferrara, never glimpsed, in the sonorous Himalayas of Beethoven, the promised land of human brotherhood.

MAXIMILIAN HARDEN, 1919

Prussia, the youngest world power, having climbed upwards at the cost of Austria and Poland, was generally hated,

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because it revealed itself as the militaristic conqueror-State, looking in all directions for booty: not as the land of Kant, Herder, Winckelmann and Humboldt.

MAXIMILIAN HARDEN, 1919



In the history of Prussia, unhappily, there was no Charles I and no Oliver Cromwell. For only the experiences of such a period, standing in crass contradiction to the traditions of Prussian history, could have saved us.

COUNT ROBERT ZEDLITZ-TRÜTZSCHLER, May 1923



The characteristic of the Hohenzollerns was their unintellectuality. Only in extremist necessity, and then only once, has the Prussian crown appealed to the intellect: when under the yoke of Napoleon the Berlin University was founded. But after this unique attempt the Hohenzollerns quickly abjured the things of the intellect. WALTER BLÖM, 1930



In its heyday the Prussian nobility was poor in political talent, for whose formation—with few exceptions—a social life is necessary; it was poor, but did not regard such a lack as poverty.

OSWALD SPENGLER, 1933



The new Germany is the old Prussia.

RUDOLF OLDEN, 1935

Those who do not know that Prussia was founded by a sovereign who suffered from an anxiety neurosis (Frederick William I) will never succeed in really understanding its character.

RUDOLF OLDEN, 1935

Prussia

The old Prussia of Frederick William I and Frederick, which the Emperor William I called the foundation of all that was great and good and admirable in Germany, which Hindenburg acknowledged, and to which the National Socialists appeal, was hated and feared "in the Empire" on account of its barbarous militarism. Lessing called it "the most slavish country in Europe," and on another occasion "the desperate galley."

RUDOLF OLDEN, 1935

The history of Prussia is the history of Junkerdom.

RUDOLF OLDEN, 1935

The Prussian historians were never compelled to change their course, to criticize an epoch, to show that something was wrong in the leadership of the State. For this reason the historiography of Prussia is the most mendacious art on earth.

RUDOLF OLDEN, 1935

In the days of Leibnitz, Rousseau and Voltaire, Potsdam created an educational system which acknowledged only one purpose: to break the will of the pupil, making him the unconditional agent of authority, and to attain this purpose by the most brutal means.

RUDOLF OLDEN, 1935

However critically a Prussian may think—and there are millions who condemn the established system—the conviction still persists, in a substratum of his intellect, that there is something glorious about the state of affairs created and consolidated by Prussian officers.

RUDOLF OLDEN, 1935

Other nations also feel that they are called to fill the rôle of a redeemer. But the salvation which Prussian Germany wishes to bring to others is merely domination. The Prussianized German nation wishes to command, and needs a commander.

RUDOLF OLDEN, 1935

IX

Berlin

How can one even be healthy in Berlin? Everything one sees there must fill one's blood with gall.

GOTTHOLD EPHRAIM LESSING, 1767



The Berlin public is so unspeakably contemptible that it can well be likened to the swine in the Gospel.

JOHANN GOTTLIEB FICHTE, 1803



It is a misfortune for the Prussian State that its capital lies in the Kurmark. What impression could its barren plains make on the mind of its inhabitants? What could it offer them? A miserable livelihood, the joyless spectacle of a lethargic soil, restricted means, and petty ends.

FREIHERR VOM STEIN, 1811



Such a desperate set of human beings inhabits that city that one cannot go far with tact; on the contrary, one must grow hair on one's teeth and be guilty of a certain coarseness in order to hold one's head above water.

WOLFGANG GOETHE, 9 December, 1823



In Germany there is no great city. It is true that there is a greater accumulation of intellect in Berlin than perhaps in any other part of the world; but it is not in the manufactured

Berlin

state, it is not retailed, it is only a local product. There are witty officials, and officers, and scholars, and merchants, but there is no witty population. Social life in Berlin is a provision-market, where everything can be obtained, fresh and of good quality, but only in the raw state: apples, potatoes, bread, and even beautiful flowers; but the heart is not meant to be a market; potatoes should not roll along the arteries of society, but blood should flow there, in which all things are dissolved, and in which potatoes and pineapples, beer and champagne, wit and stupidity can no longer be distinguished.

LUDWIG BÖRNE, 1830



Berlin, the petrified Order in Council of the Hohenzollerns, the storehouse of "intelligence," as wisdom is called in the Prussian idiom.

BETA, 1846



Why are the majority of those who write of Berlin mistaken? Because Berlin is a city of the most heterogeneous elements, which have not yet contrived to become assimilated. . . . Where in Berlin is Berlin?

ADOLF GLASBRENNER, 1847



Berlin is physically and morally an accursed hole.

ARTHUR SCHOPENHAUER, 1788-1860



There are very many people in Berlin who know every tree in the forest, who can number and describe every branch, every twig, and every leaf; but there are not many who see the wood as well as the trees.

COUNT HUGO LERCHENFELD, 1900



I feel ashamed to live in Berlin, for Berlin represents the contrary of all that I have ever loved, all that I have dreamed,

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all that I have sought to attain. I was afraid, in the first place, of seeming to be something which I would not for all the world seem to be, if I lived in Berlin. And secondly, I was afraid that if I remained in Berlin I might become something that I would not at any price become. The recognition that I may obtain through living in Berlin is as abhorrent to me, in the very depths of my soul, as if it were really to my disadvantage.

I feel my sojourn in Berlin as a continual degradation.

FRANK WEDEKIND, 1908

X

The German People

No nation—the modern nations, less than others and least of all perhaps the German—has created itself out of itself.

WOLFGANG GOETHE, 1808



But how should the German people, with its fragmentary, confused and inconstant efforts, win the regard of the heavenly Powers, which ask only for deeds, and easily see to the bottom of empty words? JOSEPH GOERRES, 1810



I have often felt bitterly chagrined at the thought of the German people, so worthy of esteem in the individual, and so miserable as a whole. WOLFGANG GOETHE, 1813

A comparison between the German people and other peoples awakens in us a sense of distress, which I do my utmost to overcome. WOLFGANG GOETHE, 1813



No other people on earth has ever been more credulous, none has been more extravagantly insane.

JOSEPH GOERRES, May 1814



It lies in their character, that in them the cold fever precedes the hot fever by years, and that what in other peoples is recovery becomes, in the Germans, a new sickness.

LUDWIG BÖRNE, February 1833

German versus Hun

The German people, as I know it, does to its martyrs what God did to Christ: it calmly allows him to be crucified, and holds him up to admiration—for a twofold reason: for what (it thinks) is he *before* he is crucified?

FRIEDRICH HEBBEL, 1836



The life of a German is like a hair which is dragged through the milk. Indeed, one might make the comparison even more exact were one to say: The German people is like a plait of thirty million interwoven hairs, quietly floating about in a great bowl of milk.

HEINRICH HEINE, May 1837

To you, a countryman, I can of course say without embarrassment that our compatriots never had any character, and were never a nation, but only a mixed mob, which any wordy rascal can rule, whose insolence is merely aggravated by compliance, but which sings small if one takes severe measures against it.

HEINRICH HEINE, 13 February, 1838



All nations are rejuvenated by inner conflict; only ours becomes ever lazier, more feeble-minded, more illiberal.

ARNOLD RUGE, 1846



There are maniacs among the people also.

FRIEDRICH HEBBEL, 30 June, 1846

Of the Cimbri and the Teutones, our forefathers, it is recorded that they chained themselves together with iron rings in battle. This shows that they were like us, in that otherwise they would have scattered in all directions.

FRIEDRICH HEBBEL, 1847

The German People

A valiant folk are you Germans, a people of noble desires!
If only your necks were not stiff! If you could turn them, and
see!

For then you might find that behind you was all that is fairest;
The things that you cry for in vain, for your eyes have not
seen them!

FRIEDRICH HEBBEL, 1848

Unhappy people, who can work in common, but cannot eat
and drink together in peace! for instead of enjoying your
prosperity like brothers you throw your knives and forks at
one another's heads.

FRIEDRICH HEBBEL, 1851



In a long period of degradation the German character has
lost much, very much, of that simple grandeur which our
Middle Ages show to us. . . . In two generations this noble
nation has produced thousands and thousands of abject
informers, and even greater numbers of subservient eaves-
droppers.

HEINRICH VON TREITSCHKE, 1861



There is no German people; nobles, middle class and
peasants are more heterogeneous than in France before the
Revolution.

HEINRICH HEINE (posthumous, 1869)



We are in character a moderate people, and yet in spirit we
are extravagant, easily excited by fantasies and reverses, and
when all is said, a people torn by remorse and the pangs of
conscience.

BOGUMIL GOLTZ, 1801-1870



Perhaps it is only that the Germans have blundered upon the
wrong climate! There is in them something that could have

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been Hellenic—that awakens to the touch of the South—as in Winckelmann, Goethe, Mozart.

FRIEDRICH NIETZSCHE, 1882–1888

A German who ventured to declare: “Two souls, alas! are dwelling in my breast!” would be taking sad liberties with the truth: or rather, he would be falling short of the truth by many souls. As a people resulting from the most monstrous mingling and juxtaposition of races, with perhaps even a preponderance of the pre-Aryan element—as a “people of the centre” in every sense, the Germans are more incomprehensible, more comprehensive, more contradictory, more unfamiliar, more incalculable, more surprising, even more terrifying, than other peoples. FRIEDRICH NIETZSCHE, 1888

We Germans assuredly do not regard ourselves as a particularly cruel and hard-hearted people, much less a particularly frivolous people, living only for the day: but one has only to consider our old penal institutions in order to discover what trouble has to be taken in order to discipline “a nation of thinkers.” (This means that even to this day we are *the* European people in which the maximum of confidence, solemnity, tastelessness and objectivity is to be found, and which has, with these qualities, a claim to train all varieties of European mandarin.) These Germans have by the most frightful means made for themselves a memorial, in order to gain the mastery over their fundamentally plebeian instincts and their boorish brutality. FRIEDRICH NIETZSCHE, 1887



Among no other people on earth does one find so many living caricatures as among the Germans.

JULIUS LANGBEHN, 1890



One would like to see the soul of the German nation gather more strength, through greater isolation, and a firmer outline,

The German People

and one forgets that their greatest characteristic is precisely the longing to be unconfin'd, to stand above all narrow national limitations.

CHRISTIAN MORGENSTERN, 1895



The nation of Kant and Goethe has for so long been deluded, has been persuaded with such cunning art, that all other peoples are actuated only by the motives of selfishness, avarice, and envy of Germany's diligence and power, that it has not only come to believe this legend, but has itself endeavoured to follow only the dictates of selfishness.

MAXIMILIAN HARDEN, April 1919



The ultimate lie of the bourgeois world created the German people, inasmuch as it created the concept of duty.

PAUL ERNST, 1921



The German people is only too prone to submit to self-deception.

MÖLLER VAN DEN BRUCK, 1933



The mentality of the German people can be expressed in two words: the words *vult decipi*. It *wishes* to be deceived, it does not wish to know the truth, in so far as this is disagreeable, and it would rather perish with a lie than live on with the admission that it was mistaken.

ARTHUR LANDSBERGER, 1925



These sixty millions, the core of the continent's heart, the eternal womb of ideas, and music, and the sincerest poetry, but burdened with a history dark and grievous beyond comparison, as a public entity degenerate and perjured, so

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incapable of being the body of its rich soul, so ignorant of itself, so childish that it falls a victim to every leering flatterer.

BRUNO FRANK, 1928

There is nothing that the German people is fonder of protesting, in its uncertainty, than that it is unique, the people of peoples, the chosen among the nations, surrounded by peacocks and tigers, the only true, pure, valiant, pious people, magnanimous and truth-loving. So extreme was its tendency to romantic self-narcosis that it welcomed anyone with a flood of vapid and unconventional phrases who commended himself as the messiah and living symbol of the nation's virtues.

BRUNO FRANK, 1928



In consequence of the mingling of blood the soul of our nation is so ambiguous, so multivocal, that accordingly as a foreign influence is applied or inhibited, *anything* may come out of it, *anything* may be expected of it.

EWALD BANSE, 1932



From 1648 onwards the Germans were the unworldly people of theoreticians, poets and musicians, for such people need no money. They mistook—and they still mistake today—romantic imaginings for actual politics, for such a mistake costs nothing—except success.

OSWALD SPENGLER, 1933

XI

These Germans!

It is hardly believable what delight the Germans take in such fellows, who by their singing, their chattering and screaming, their leaping and scuffling, make such a clamour that the room threatens to collapse.

ERASMUS, 1467-1536



No longer are the Germans men, for now like children all
That look on something new and strange, they stamp and
roar and call.

FRIEDRICH VON LOGAU, 1604-1655



In the Germans, if one mark them closely, one finds imitation everywhere, though indeed it may be more or less disguised. Even in our trade of fighting for pay we are imitating the defence of the fatherland.

GEORG CHRISTOPH LICHTENBERG, 1742-1799

It seems to me that the German reveals his powers pre-eminently in original works in which a more singular mind has shown him the way. In other words, he possesses the art of being most perfectly original when he is imitating. He is sensitive to forms, and can seize them in a moment, and he can pipe his tune in any key that has been given him by a more original foreigner.

GEORG CHRISTOPH LICHTENBERG, 1742-1799

German versus Hun

The greatest fault of the Germans is their verbosity.

FREDERICK THE GREAT, 1775



If one shows the Germans a flower, they immediately ask:
Has it a scent? Can one make tea from it? Can we imitate it?

WOLFGANG GOETHE, 1780

It is characteristic of the Germans that they take everything
heavily, so that everything weighs heavily upon them.

WOLFGANG GOETHE, 1796

Since it is the characteristic of our countrymen to do good
without much display, it seldom occurs to them that there
is also a way of doing the right thing with grace and charm;
they rather fall, on the contrary, being urged by a spirit of
contradiction, into the fault of presenting their most amiable
virtue in contrast with a surly demeanour.

WOLFGANG GOETHE, 1796



Never laugh at the child, if you see him with whip and spur
Riding the wooden horse, big and courageous in fancy.

For you, Germans, you too
Are poor in deeds and full of ideas.

FRIEDRICH HÖLDERLIN, 1799



With fantastic obstinacy he (the German) holds on to what
he has once assimilated; tenaciously clinging to the forms
which he has once fashioned for himself. In the realm of ideas
he creates his own world, and there finds refreshment in the
images from the outer spheres, which he has received,
through his senses, into that inner sphere. One who would
draw him out of this circle, into which he has charmed the
departed spirits of external phenomena, must address his

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conjurations not to the senses—he must convince the understanding, and thereupon this will arouse itself, nor will it at once return to its slumbers.

JOSEPH GOERRES, 1800



Here in Germany we are very intelligent, and have good intentions, both for domestic use; but if ever anything peculiar presents itself we do not in the least know how to deal with it: our intelligence turns to stupidity and our goodwill to malignity.

WOLFGANG GOETHE, 1804-1807

In Germany all excellent things make their way very slowly

WOLFGANG GOETHE, 1809



Other people, other nations, if they have ambition, seek to become something; the genuine German wants to have been something.

LUDWIG BÖRNE, 1787-1837

Of these things the Germans have too much: of those they have too little. They have too much morality, too much economy, and too much learning. On the other hand, they have (in general) too little wit, too little taste, and too little *savoir vivre*.

LUDWIG BÖRNE, 1811

The Germans, it is true, have much physical courage, but too little intellectual courage. They have not the courage to be witty, they have not the courage to handle their language familiarly, and out of sheer modesty they hide themselves behind morality.

LUDWIG BÖRNE, 1811



It has from all time been the nature of the Germans to insist that they know more about a craft than the craftsman himself and understand it better than the man who has spent his life at it.

WOLFGANG GOETHE, 1812

German versus Hun

With the Germans the ideal immediately becomes sentimental.

WOLFGANG GOETHE, 1813



The Germans have been corrupted by their covetousness.

JOSEPH GOERRES, May 1814

They (the Germans) are ungrateful by nature and remember no benefits.

JOSEPH GOERRES, May 1814

They (the Germans) have elevated uncouthness into an art, and have developed boorishness into a system.

JOSEPH GOERRES, May 1814



The Germans are ruminating animals.

WOLFGANG GOETHE, 1814

The German lives in isolation and seeks a reputation for cultivating an original individuality.

WOLFGANG GOETHE, May 1815

I know the dear Germans well; first they are silent, then they haggle, then they turn away, then they steal and dissemble.

WOLFGANG GOETHE, 9 August, 1816

The Germans do not always know for certain whether they are carting full sheaves of wheat or bundles of straw.

WOLFGANG GOETHE, 28 August, 1816



If the Germans could speak in musical tones, and act in accordance with their speech, they would be the foremost of all peoples, and might even respect themselves.

LUDWIG BÖRNE, 1818

These Germans!

The Germans are not pleased if one gives them a shelled nut; they like to crack it.

LUDWIG BÖRNE, 1821

Germans, like monkeys, will turn a nut over in their hands a hundred times before they crack it. They play with it so long that they often drop it, but they would rather lose the kernel than lose patience.

LUDWIG BÖRNE, 1821



For that matter, the German is much too cultured and reasonable to tolerate a dashing and full-blooded frivolity. Indeed, he does not laugh until he is certain that he can afterwards give a definite explanation of the reason why he laughed!

CHRISTIAN DIETRICH GRABBE, 1822



When the Germans begin to repeat an idea, or a desire, or whatever you will, there is no stopping them: they go on singing in unison, as the Protestant Church sings its chorales.

WOLFGANG GOETHE, 1823



Among a million Germans there are only ten human beings. The rest are tailors, merchants, soldiers, lawyers, astronomers, diplomats, clergymen, scholars, police inspectors, foresters—or whatever else a man can be when he is nothing.

LUDWIG BÖRNE, 1826



I know my Germans. They will be alarmed, they will deliberate, and they will do nothing.

HEINRICH HEINE, 1 May, 1827



The German believes himself to be so little original that originality, to his thinking, is a *recherché* import.

CHRISTIAN DIETRICH GRABBE, 1827

German versus Hun

The Germans cannot shake off their Philistinism.

WOLFGANG GOETHE, 1828



With the Germans one has to exaggerate everything. They have the hide of the elephant; they don't feel a gentle tickling; one has to jab a stake into their ribs.

LUDWIG BÖRNE, 1828

The true German is embarrassed if he is caught uttering a witty conceit; a chaste intellect, he blushes at the libidinous kisses of phantasy.

LUDWIG BÖRNE, 1829-1839

Schiller said: "One must tell the Germans the truth as bluntly as possible." Well, I have often told this truth, and more bluntly than Schiller. One must anger them incessantly; this alone is effective. One should not anger them singly—that would be unjust, for there are good people among them; one must anger them *en masse*. One must tease them until they manifest a national wrath, unless one can inspire them to feel a national joy; and the one perhaps leads to the other.

LUDWIG BÖRNE, 1830

Everyone has the right to be a blockhead; but even a right should be exercised with moderation. The Germans abuse it.

LUDWIG BÖRNE, 8 January, 1831

I can no longer understand the Germans. They fan the fire and their own skin is burnt; they pour oil into the wound and the pain is theirs.

LUDWIG BÖRNE, 17 January, 1831



In German one lies when one is polite.

WOLFGANG GOETHE, 1831



We good Germans are too new a people for wit and humour, for satirical or genuinely comic literature; too doltish, too

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pedantic, too tearful; too timid, too soberly phlegmatic, and also too unhelpful. We are not free enough; and by this I mean intellectually free; and we are too provincial.

KARL JULIUS WEBER, 1832-1840



Nothing in human life is more difficult—excepting to fish out a lemon-pip when it is lying at the bottom of a glass of lemonade—than to mean well by the Germans for a week together.

LUDWIG BÖRNE, 4 March, 1833



As for us Germans, we are honest folk and good citizens. What Nature has denied us we seek to attain by study. Only when we roar too loudly are we sometimes afraid that the people in the boxes might be startled, and might punish us. We then explain, insinuatingly, that we are not really lions, but only scraps of paper sewn into a tragedy-lion's skin, and this insinuation we call irony.

HEINRICH HEINE, 1837

The Germans are valiant without any *arrière pensée*; they fight for the sake of fighting, just as they drink for the sake of drinking.

HEINRICH HEINE, 1837



The German who does not himself possess the faculty of originating a fashion accepts it unthinkingly if it comes to him from abroad; in this weakness he forgets himself and blindly sacrifices his own judgement to the alien idea.

RICHARD WAGNER, 1840



The first German speech I heard here in the street was when one clerk said to another: "If you were a philosopher, as I am, etc." The second German speech was heard from one of

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two street urchins, probably from Alsace, who were quarrelling: "Now, you filthy dog, don't scratch my nose off!" Characteristic enough: fighting and philosophizing.

FRIEDRICH HEBBEL, 1847



The Germans are accustomed to accepting words instead of concepts.

ARTHUR SCHOPENHAUER, 1847



To the Germans a figure which has not a label hanging out of its mouth is immediately unintelligible.

FRIEDRICH HEBBEL, 1848

To the German, by reason of the fundamental traits of his national character, Schiller's defects must of necessity count as virtues; he loves the hazy and indefinite, which may be one thing and yet seem another; so that Schiller, who never offers him anything quite exclusively and merely poetical, is his favourite poet.

FRIEDRICH HEBBEL, 1848

I am only surprised that unity should prevail in the body of a German: that the heart does not rebel against the head, the arm against the leg.

FRIEDRICH HEBBEL, 1848



It is a characteristic defect of the Germans that they look in the clouds for what lies at their feet.

ARTHUR SCHOPENHAUER, 1851



The German, when he is being educated, does not ask: "What does a man need for his house?"—but, what does he need if, like Robinson Crusoe, he is one day wrecked upon a desert

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island? And on these lines he builds up his curriculum. Generally speaking, we do not start from the centre: we draw a circle at a venture and then look for its middle point.

FRIEDRICH HEBBEL, 1854



Things have to go very hardly with us, the sons of Teut, before we have courage: so long as we still have something to lose we are afraid; but if we are stripped naked and flogged each one of us is a lion. OTTO VON BISMARCK, 1854



Are they such men? Ay, 'tis indeed their nature,
To have but small regard for what they know.
Such things are dragged and trampled underfoot.
What is, is worthless; but what was is sacred.
Germany's greatness burgeons from the grave!

FRIEDRICH HALM, 1857



How did we Germans ever come to earn a reputation for bashful modesty? There is not one among us who does not know more about everything—from making war to catching fleas—than all the specialists put together; while in other countries there are many people who admit that they understand less than others about many things, and are therefore modest and hold their tongues. OTTO VON BISMARCK, 1862



The Germans are dangerous. They will suddenly take a poem out of their pocket, or begin to discuss philosophy.

HEINRICH HEINE (posthumous), 1869



When the German cannot rise to eminence he produces a less than mediocre impression. FRIEDRICH NIETZSCHE, 1872

German versus Hun

Our German national character, that always wants the best and so often loses the merely good.

OTTO VON BISMARCK, 1877



How is it that the Germans have no soul? They are slow in perception and they do not allow their perception to ripen; they are thwarted by professional preoccupations or everyday affairs; so they make themselves mediocre, and remain for ever like unripe fruits.

FRIEDRICH NIETZSCHE, 1876-1879

The Germans alternate between surrender to foreign influences and a vengeful longing for originality, and the quite unobjectionably good Germans, who are productive, have been mediators, and have done their work as Europeans, like Mozart and the historians, etc.

FRIEDRICH NIETZSCHE, 1876-1879

The Germans are afraid lest one should not credit them with passion; so they forthwith make grimaces and commit excesses, not by reason of strong emotion, but in order to make one believe in them.

FRIEDRICH NIETZSCHE, 1876-1879

Even of our greatest men one is obliged to say: "If only they had a little more genius, and a little less of the play-actor!"

FRIEDRICH NIETZSCHE, 1876-1879



Among us Germans there is so much killing of time with trivial occupations; for example, beer-drinking. The man who sits over his morning or evening pint, smoking, perhaps, and reading the newspapers, believes himself to be quite

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sufficiently occupied, and goes home with a good conscience feeling that he has done his bit.

OTTO VON BISMARCK, 1881



The best and the worst of the Germans, and even of their scholars, has hitherto been that they are more prone to superstition and eager credulity than other peoples: their vices are, now as of old, drink and a tendency to suicide (this being a sign of spiritual lethargy, which can be easily driven to throw over the traces); their besetting peril lies in all that fetters the power of the intellect and releases the affects (as, for example, the immoderate addiction to music and the spiritual intoxicants): for the emotion of the German is unprofitable and self-destructive as that of the drunkard.

FRIEDRICH NIETZSCHE, 1881

The Germans think they are profound when they feel heavy and melancholy; they sweat when they feel; and sweating they regard as a proof of their "earnestness." Their souls are boorish; the spirit of beer is potent even in their ideas.

FRIEDRICH NIETZSCHE, 1882-1888

The German drags his soul after him, and he does the same with all that he experiences. He digests events badly; he has never "finished" with them; German profanity is often only a heavy and uncertain "digestion."

FRIEDRICH NIETZSCHE, 1885

The German soul is full of paths and bypaths; in it there are caverns and hiding-places and castle keeps; in its disorder there is something of the charm of the mysterious; the German is at home on all the crooked paths to chaos. And as everything loves its like, so the German loves the clouds, and all that is undefined, in act of becoming, crepuscular, veiled

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and misty: everything uncertain, unformed, evasive and unnatural he feels to be "profound."

FRIEDRICH NIETZSCHE, 1885

With the German, as with a woman, one never reaches firm ground. There is none: that is all.

FRIEDRICH NIETZSCHE, 1888

No conception fully expresses how vulgar the Germans are. But the superlative of vulgarity is this—they are not even ashamed of the mere fact that they are Germans.

FRIEDRICH NIETZSCHE, 1888



The German fights and sings. JULIUS LANGBEHN, 1890

In the German character there is a certain unrest; if none the less one seeks to enforce an artificial calm upon it, the result is untruthfulness or obliquity. But in the German character, especially in its genuine manifestations, there is also a certain ruthlessness. The German is candid and cruel, much as children are.

JULIUS LANGBEHN, 1890



The Germans are of course splendid fellows, but each has half a bottle of wine too little in his body. He has to be set going by artificial means; he needs stimulus and encouragement.

OTTO VON BISMARCK, 1890

It is an old German trait to wait until others are obliged to do what one ought to have done oneself.

OTTO VON BISMARCK, 1893

It is a characteristic, if not of human beings in general, yet at all events of the Germans, that the discontented man is

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more industrious and more alert than the contented, and the covetous man more assiduous than the satiated.

OTTO VON BISMARCK, 1898



Strange as it may sound, we might regard the Germans as a reincarnation of the self-tormenting Jean-Jacques Rousseau, who was always idly prating of *la vertu* and *la nature*, while he of all men was bursting with libidinous desires and secret covetousness; who preached the brotherhood of man in moving phrases, while his *Weltschmerz* arose from nothing more than unsatisfied egoism.

KARL BLEIBTREU, 1904



All we Germans are suffering from the hypochondria of "obligations." They constitute our strength and our weaknesses.

CHRISTIAN MORGENSTERN, 1910



The German is particularly badly off, on account of the peculiar unreality of his spirit. In no other human being is thought so innately alien to life; in his case what Schopenhauer declared to be a general truth does actually apply: the intellect is parasitic on the will. More than any other human being he lacks the involuntary, matter-of-fact, living connection between thought and existence, which makes him sometimes unpractical, sometimes blindly industrious, sometimes an ideologist, sometimes an unscrupulous business man. For this reason it is extremely difficult for him to manifest any wholeness in his life, and in particular it places the greater obstacles in the way of any genuine spiritual culture, inasmuch as the German soul is innately undifferentiated and lethargic.

COUNT HERMANN KEYSERLING, 1921



The German is more of a doctrinaire than any other human being. In practical questions he is far less able than the

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English, the French and Italians to free himself from the network of theories. With his doctrinairism he bangs his head against the wall.

PRINCE BÜLOW, 1921-1926

Sidney Sonnino once said to me in the winter of 1914-1915: "Of course, I admire the organizing capacity of the Germans. But when it is unchecked and unbridled as it is with you, it leads to arteriosclerosis, to spiritual calcification." Something of the kind was said by Balfour during the world-war; the Germans had a talent for organizing which was a danger to the world, but perhaps for this very reason they were no psychologists.

PRINCE BÜLOW, 1921-1926



We always have to be compelled to take our decisions, and when at length we contrive an act of will, it is either too soon or too late, but not at the right moment; and it overshoots the mark or falls short, and in any case is beside the mark.

MÖLLER VAN DEN BRUCK, 1922



One knows a German merely by his cough.

GERHART HAUPTMANN, 1924



Without seeming to exaggerate it is difficult to explain how hopelessly tactless Germans often are.

DAISY PRINCESS OF PLESS, 1928



Of course, we Germans are like that; with us the idea comes always too late.

DR. JOSEPH GOEBBELS, *Der Angriff*, 12 November, 1928



The German, whose regard is closely focussed on the object, and who tends to perform a task for the sake of work, has

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no active tendency to propaganda, but is, passively, highly receptive to it.

EWALD BANSE, 1932

The German character has been modified by Ostic, East Baltic and Dinaric influences, and by the character of the Germanic race, which was circumscribed by its special community life. Its main features appear in two categories. The first is of a positive nature: creative power, work for the sake of work, individualism. The other category is more of a negative character: envy—that is, the obverse of individualism, which cannot endure that another should be or possess more, and is eager to pull down one's neighbour to the level of one's own nullity: lack of political sense, lack of the capacity for enthusiasm, which infallibly accompanies the latter, and unpractical dreaming.

EWALD BANSE, 1932



The German forgets that one cannot handle an ideal too carefully and thriftily and lucidly: that nothing could be more dishonest than to distort it by giving it a commonplace complexion and by systematizing it.

EUGEN DIESEL, 1934



The German's desire for order is stronger than his desire for liberty.

EMIL LUDWIG, 1934



Every people, every individual, loves his natural countenance when it is distorted by narrow fanaticism. But to no mortal countenance is the convulsive, strong, aggressive, hostile sullen grimace more disfiguring than to the German.

CARL ZUCKMAYER, 1938



The German honestly believes that he is a realist, and holds his own illusion for the reality.

HERMANN RAUSCHNING, 1938

X

Barbarians

In Germany the progress of art and science was hindered by the wars which followed one another, from Charles V to the war of the Spanish Succession. The nation was poverty-stricken, the princes were poor. One had to think first of all of recultivating the soil, in order to make sure of the most indispensable sustenance. One had to introduce manufactures in order to exploit the available raw materials. This task engrossed the nation almost exclusively, and prevented it from ridding itself completely of the barbarism which still clung to it.

FREDERICK THE GREAT, 1775



Barbarians from of old; having become barbarian in their industry, their learning, and even their religion, profoundly incapable of any divine emotion, infected to the marrow with every degree of excess and penury, distasteful to every well-bred soul, dull and inharmonious as the shards of a discarded vessel. It is a harsh thing to say, yet I say it; because it is the truth; I cannot imagine any people more disrupted than the German. Artisans you see, but no human beings; thinkers, but no human beings; priests, but no human beings; lords and serfs, youths and persons of mature years, but no human beings.

FRIEDRICH HÖLDERLIN, 1799

I tell you: there is nothing sacred that is not profaned, nothing that is not degraded to the level of a miserable expedient by this people, and what even among the savages preserves its divine purity is practised by these calculating

Barbarians

barbarians as one practises a handicraft; and it could not be otherwise, for when once and for all a human being is trained, then he follows his purpose, then he seeks his profit; he dotes and dreams no longer, God forbid!—he lives sedately, and when he makes holiday, and when he loves and when he prays, and even when the holy festival of the Spring, when the Day of Atonement dissolves all cares, and charms innocence into a guilty heart; when, intoxicated by the warm rays of the sun, the slave joyfully forgets his fetters, and softened by the God-inspired air, misanthropists are peaceful as children—when even the caterpillar takes wing, and the bees swarm, the German sticks to his business and does not trouble much about the weather.

FRIEDRICH HÖLDERLIN, 1799



Niebuhr was right when he foresaw the advent of a barbaric age. It is already here; we are living in it: for in what does barbarism consist, but in the fact that excellence is not recognized?

WOLFGANG GOETHE, 22 March, 1831



Terrible, revolting days. . . . I saw into the past, even down to the primeval German forest, inhabited by bears.

FRIEDRICH HEBBEL, 1848



The Barbarian

The savage fights his way out of the womb
And ere one curbs him, all things good and great,
Art, Science, State, and Church, he tumbles down
From their high seats, in which they were secure,
Down to the level plain of his own baseness,
Till all things are the same, for all are base.

FRANZ GRILLPARZER, 1849

German versus Hun

Barbarism is returning.

ARTHUR SCHOPENHAUER, 1851



When amidst the first tumult of the outbreak of the last great war (1870–1871) an embittered French *savant* called the Germans barbarians, and reproached them with the lack of a culture, he was heard plainly enough in Germany for the Germans to take it amiss. They exhausted themselves in assurances that the German people is the most scholarly, most learned, greatest and most virtuous people on earth: feeling tolerably secure even against the reproach of cannibalism and piracy. Now, when the Germans have had ample time to reconsider many of the words then cast at us, there must be some who recognize that the Frenchman was right: the Germans are barbarians. FRIEDRICH NIETZSCHE, 1873

Germany, in her actions, and reactions, reveals herself as barbarian. FRIEDRICH NIETZSCHE, 1876–1879



Schiller's epigraph to his first work was *in tyrannos*: if today one wished to address a generalization to the Germans he would have to write the words *in barbaros*.

JULIUS LANGBEHN, 1890

The German people, in its present culture, is over-ripe; but fundamentally its over-ripeness is only an unripeness; for as contrasted with culture barbarism is always unripe, and in Germany the systematic, scientific, educated barbarism has been native from of old. JULIUS LANGBEHN, 1890

The Muses dance, the professor lectures. German culture has always suffered under the lecture; for the German is for ever prone to overdo things, whether out of conscientiousness, or because of deficient self-restraint: and this is the barbaric trait in his character. JULIUS LANGBEHN, 1890

Barbarians

The initial victory of Arminius in the desperate battle with Rome had desperately evil consequences for Germany to the east and north of the Roman *times*: The Romans thenceforth left the Germans on the east of the Rhine to their barbarism.

WERNER HEGEMANN, 1934



The Teutomania that transforms the old Germans, the analphabetic dwellers in swamps and forests, into legendary champions, is not only an extravagant nationalism, but also a denial of civilization, a longing for barbarism, for lawlessness and savagery.

RUDOLF OLDEN, 1935

XIII

Total Subjection

I am tired of ruling over slaves.

FREDERICK THE GREAT, 1785



Nothing is at once more distressing and more ridiculous than the morbid longing, peculiar to the Germans, to pen themselves up of their own free will, and in their dread of the rare wolf to surrender themselves to the caprices of the shepherd and his inevitable dogs.

LUDWIG BÖRNE, 1826

We are incapable of the ecstasy that lifts man up to God, making the creature a creator. The police must issue a decree—and this must be posted at the town hall—that at four o'clock in the afternoon we are to be filled with rapture and jubilation, and then, at the appointed hour, we shall be filled with rapture and jubilation.

LUDWIG BÖRNE, 1828

When, as often happens in Germany, laws are conceived in the language of command, the citizens become accustomed to regarding laws merely as orders, which one obeys, not because one respects them, but because one fears them.

LUDWIG BÖRNE, 1828



In our beloved Weimar I have only to look out of the window in order to realize how things are with us. Recently, when the snow lay on the ground, and my neighbours' children

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wanted to try their little sledges on the street, a policeman appeared immediately, and I saw the poor little things escaping as quickly as they could. Now, when the spring sun entices them from their homes, and they would like to play a little with their comrades out of doors, I see that they are still uneasy, as though they did not feel safe, and as though they feared the approach of some dictatorial policeman. No urchin can crack a whip, or sing or shout, but in a moment the policeman is there, in order to forbid him. With us everything is directed towards making our beloved young things prematurely tame, and expelling all human nature, all originality, all wildness, so that in the end nothing is left but the Philistine.

WOLFGANG GOETHE, 12 March, 1828



The Germans are innately so servile by nature that if they were free to forgo their own freedom, they would submit all their doings, their thought and speech, their movements, their rest, their eating and drinking, their laughing and weeping, and all things else, even to their dreams and their laws, to magistrates and administrators. Such miserable folk do not deserve to have good princes; they ought to be sent to Morocco.

LUDWIG BÖRNE, 1829-1834

The Germans cannot live without ordering and obeying, and it is difficult to determine in which they take the greater pleasure. And it is a very German poet who sings:

“Thou must rule or else obey:
Anvil or hammer thou must be.”

A pithy saying, though it contains a certain measure of untruth, and a shocking calumny of human nature. To rule or obey: that means to be a slave in this manner or in that; in the one case the cage has golden bars, in the other bars of iron. The chain that binds is bound as fast as that which it fetters. But man was born for freedom, and only in

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so far as oxygen must be mixed with nitrogen before we can breathe, it may be that freedom must be restricted in order to remain enjoyable. But those who would attribute this excess of governing to the government would commit—at all events in Germany—a great injustice. It is the fault and the weakness of the subjects. Let the experiment be made of abrogating the hundred superfluous laws, which forbid what should not be forbidden, or permit what requires no permission, and you would see how embarrassed the citizens would feel at every step, and how often they would complain of the absence of prescript or regulation. This is because they lack the virtue which, without compulsion, assures each one of his rights; and they lack virtue because they lack the strength to defend their own rights; and they lack strength because they lack spirit, which is the lever of the will; and they lack spirit because they are Germans.

LUDWIG BÖRNE, 1829–1834

People say that the Germans are pious, modest, and liberal-minded. But is one pious if one shatters God's masterpiece, the human being? Is one modest if one is arrogant? Is one liberal-minded if one is servile?

LUDWIG BÖRNE, 1830

The old Germans had certainly more liberty than those of today, but they were not more liberal-minded.

LUDWIG BÖRNE, 1831

What is the origin of this servile character in the Germans? I do not know; but they have always been the same. It is believed that the people came from Asia. Perhaps they were there a sort of pariah caste, who at last could no longer endure their life and so came away. But the dog, having broken away from the chain, still remains a dog; he only changes his master.

LUDWIG BÖRNE, 1831

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That's the good German. If for once a weary citizen discards his heavy pack of subservience, his neighbour promptly picks it up and adds the burden to his own. And it is to this country that I have to return!

LUDWIG BÖRNE, 1831

The poor Germans! Living in the basement, crushed by the seven stories of the superior classes, it eases their distress to speak of people who dwell in the cellar, still lower than themselves.

LUDWIG BÖRNE, 1832

They throw liberty into the mire, so that it looks like slavery.

LUDWIG BÖRNE, 1832

When a German jurist is suddenly confronted with a political crime he is like a man stricken with apoplexy; all his intellectual powers are paralysed, and he sinks into the perplexity of a childish and immature intelligence. He is then no longer a human being; he is merely an animal that eats and drinks—and a servant of the State.

LUDWIG BÖRNE, 1833



But are not we (in Germany) in a permanent condition of forcible constraint? Because we were born and grew up in prison we no longer realize that we are held fast in a dungeon, with fettered hands and feet and a gag in our mouth.

GEORG BÜCHNER, 1833

What do you (Germans) call the legal state of affairs? A law which makes the great mass of the citizens a herd of inoffensive cattle, in order to satisfy the unnatural exigencies of an insignificant and corrupt minority? And this law, supported by crude military power, and by the cunning of its agents, this law is simply a permanent brute force, an offence to sane intelligence.

GEORG BÜCHNER, 1837

You are like the heathen who worship the crocodile that tears them to pieces.

GEORG BÜCHNER, 1834

German versus Hun

As the Prophet wrote, so it is to this day in Germany: your bones are dried up, for the state in which you are living is one of vain oppression.

GEORG BÜCHNER, 1834

In Germany it is today as the Prophet Micah wrote, Chap. 7, verses 3 and 4: "The great man, he uttereth his mischievous desire, so they wrap it up. The best of them is as a briar: the most upright is sharper than a thorn hedge."

GEORG BÜCHNER, 1834



What ails us, O Germans?
A national prison
And a common whip!

HEINRICH HEINE, 1836



Because the Germans know that the wild beasts are free they are afraid that if they were free they would be wild beasts.

FRIEDRICH HEBBEL, 1836



It becomes the subject to pay due obedience to his king and sovereign prince, and by compliance with the orders issued to him, to acquiesce in the responsibility which the authority appointed by God assumes for such purpose; but it does not become him to judge the actions of the supreme head of the State by the measure of his limited understanding, and in conceited arrogance to presume to utter a public judgement on the legality of the same.

ADOLF ROCHUS VON ROCHOW
(Prussian Minister for the Interior), 1838



Cousin "Teuton" has a monstrous respect for Authorities. A thing may be never so just and true: he regards it with

Total Subjection

timidity unless it comes from the lips of a highly placed personage or a recognized man of learning; his respect is all the greater if the man has been a long time dead.

HOFFMANN VON FALLERSLEBEN, 1844

A nation of independent men ought to do mighty things, but our nation of intelligent, learned and prosperous servants is simply pitiable. Any capable man ought to be ashamed to do homage to this German nationality.

HOFFMANN VON FALLERSLEBEN, 1844 (who three years earlier wrote "Deutschland, Deutschland über alles!")



Only in the piety of total subjection do his dreams of human liberty allow the German to taste the bliss of believing that the reality is beautiful because it is German.

ARNOLD RUGE, 1846



Courage on the field of battle is with us common property; but you will not seldom find that quite respectable people are lacking in civilian courage.

OTTO VON BISMARCK, 17 May, 1847



The Most German

The ass defends himself never; most German of all the beasts
No one finds him a spoil-sport; not even the wolf that
devours him.

FRIEDRICH HEBBEL, 1898



They follow like sheep, and they follow asses. And this is because no nation is so little inclined as the German to judge for itself, and to pass sentence accordingly, though life and letters offer occasion for such judgement every hour of the day.

ARTHUR SCHOPENHAUER, 1851

German versus Hun

Even today many an ardent spirit in Germany repeats the savage question of Alfieri: whether a man endowed with civic feeling, and living under the yoke of despotism, should take it upon himself to engender children, calling into existence beings who, the more sensitive their conscience, the stronger their sense of justice, must suffer all the more severely under that reversal of all concepts of honour, justice and purity wherewith tyranny infects a nation.

HEINRICH VON TREITSCHKE, 1861



The German is like the slave who, without fetters, without lash, obeys his master's mere word, indeed his glance. Slavery is inherent in him, in his very soul, and worse than the material slavery is the spiritual. The German must be liberated from within; no external help will avail.

HEINRICH HEINE (*Literary Remains*, pub. 1869)

The German marriage is no true marriage. The husband has no wife, but a maid-servant, and in the spirit he continues to live his isolated bachelor life, even in the family circle. I do not mean by this that he is the master; on the contrary, he is sometimes only the servant of his serving-maid, and even in his own home he does not renounce his servile state.

HEINRICH HEINE (*Literary Remains*, pub. 1869)



The Germans believe that strength ought to manifest itself in harshness and cruelty; then they subject themselves readily and with admiration; for once they have got rid of their compassionate weakness for all nonentities and take a pious delight in terror.

FRIEDRICH NIETZSCHE, 1876-1879

Total Subjection

A German is capable of great things, but it is improbable that he will do them; for he obeys where he can, as is comfortable to a lethargic spirit. If he is faced with the necessity of standing alone and casting off his lethargy, if it is no longer possible for him to conceal himself as a cipher in a sum (and in this capacity his value is far inferior to that of a Frenchman or an Englishman)—then he makes discovery of his powers; then he becomes dangerous, malignant, profound, audacious, and brings to light the treasure of dormant energy which he bears within him, and in which no one (not even he himself) had believed. FRIEDRICH NIETZSCHE, 1881

Personal distinction—that is the antique virtue. To subject oneself, to obey, publicly or in secret—that is German virtue.

FRIEDRICH NIETZSCHE, 1881



In the morning we are practising hygienic “Swedish exercises,” together with the Kaiser. A pretty spectacle: twelve such men in different positions! A comical sight, when all the old military crocks have to do knee-bends together, grimacing as they bend! The Kaiser often bursts out laughing, and helps them on with a dig in the ribs, when the old boys behave as though this distinction afforded them the greatest delight; but afterwards, among themselves, they clench their fists in their pockets, and scold at the Kaiser like so many old women: cowardly, mendacious fellows!

ALFRED VON KIDERLEN-WÄCHTER, 1894



This intellectual servility goes so far that there are men who always wait to hear what the Kaiser says, and then, some time afterwards, come out with *his* opinions.

COUNT ROBERT ZEDLITZ-TRÜTZSCHLER, 1903

German versus Hun

The more one lives in this country, the more one realizes the feeling of cheap, jealous snobbery and mistrust which underlies everything. . . . They listen to all you say and repeat it in whichever way they like, either to make it better or worse: it depends on the mood they are in. They either wish you good or evil; some are very nice, some are not great gentlemen; because they have no great, old family tradition, full of generosity and broadmindedness. "Live and let live" is not their motto: it is rather "Live as I wish; move as I say; sit or stand as I order; think as I think; speak as I do."

DAISY PRINCESS OF PLESS, 28 August, 1915



This conceited servility is simply the concomitant of any education which favours mediocrity. It has created the "official character" which would like to turn Germany into a prison. The contemptible spirit of lackeydom that rules our public opinion has also graduated from this school.

RICHARD DEHMEL, 1916



Our officers were more like non-commissioned officers before the higher ranks; even the field-marshall stood solemn and stiff before the All-Highest war-lord, like a recruit before his sergeant; for after all, the second Wilhelm was nothing more. Even a genius like Bismarck was so inhibited that he persisted in his reverence of royalty instead of becoming a rebel.

HANS W. FISCHER, 1921



Longer than any other people, and also more intensively than any other, this German people remained under the police-truncheon of authority, and tolerated it. Taste, dignity, liberty and deportment were drubbed out of its mind and soul. Nature was really driven out with a pitchfork; that Nature of whom the poet says that she always comes back.

Total Subjection

She always comes back, but by a strange and disastrous path, to judge by appearances; crippled on the way, she slavers and lusts where no man of any dignity would give way to his "nature." Without a doubt there are many among these intimidated and therefore hypocritical people who see in *Daphnis and Chloe* only their own dirty thoughts, and on reading it begin to grin repulsively. So far has even one century of tutelage by the authorities brought this people that a great proportion of them, out of sexual hypocrisy, commit secret impurities with things which would have not the slightest sexual appeal for any respectable person.

FRANZ BLEI, 1924



The German people is a slave people.

DR. JOSEPH GOEBBELS in *Der Angriff*, 25 July, 1927



The Germans, and more particularly the Prussians, adore being ruled and kept in their places, and perspire with satisfaction when they get plentiful opportunities for heel-clicking and hand-kissing.

DAISY PRINCESS OF PLESS, 1928



When Bebel observed that the German people has the soul of a lackey he was right as far as the majority are concerned. With us the lackeys of success are more numerous than elsewhere.

OSWALD SPENGLER, 1933

XIV

German “Honesty”

If someone were to bequeath 100,000 louis d’or to the greatest scoundrel in Germany, how many claimants to the legacy would not come forward!

GEORG CHRISTOPH LICHTENBERG, 1742-1799



In eternal contradiction between that which they postulate and that which happens out of accordance with their postulate, the Germans appear to be not merely blameworthy, but—because they speak only of their concepts—untruthful and dishonest; because in their concepts of justice and duties they include necessity, but nothing happens in accordance with their necessity; and they themselves are well accustomed to this, partly because their words always contradict their deeds, and partly because they always try to make out that events are something quite different from what they really are, and to twist the explanation of the same in accordance with certain concepts.

GEORG WILHELM FRIEDRICH HEGEL, 1802



German faith has grown grey with grief and dumb with silence; for she has lived long years in solitary mourning, because the people cast her out.

ERNST MORITZ ARNDT, 1813



If one wishes to learn the full enormity of German dishonesty one must make oneself acquainted with German literature.

WOLFGANG GOETHE, 1813-1814

German "Honesty"

No lie was so crassly contrived that the Germans did not believe it. Nothing disgraceful has ever befallen them but they have discovered a good side to it.

JOSEPH GOERRES, 1814



Other peoples may be more versatile, wittier and more amusing, but none is so loyal as the loyal German people. German loyalty! it is no modern flower of speech. In your courts, ye German princes, they should sing and sing again the song of the faithful Eckart, and the wicked Burgundy who had his beloved children killed, and found that he was still as loyal as ever.

HEINRICH HEINE, 1824

I do not care to think of Germany. . . . For two years past I have heard nothing very gratifying from Germany, and the Germans whom I see in Paris have really saved me from homesickness. Riff-raff, beggars, who threaten if one gives them nothing, rogues who are for ever prating of honour and fatherland; liars and thieves.

HEINRICH HEINE, 1835



Now, after twenty-one years, I understand what Goethe said to me in 1814, in Berka, where I found him reading de Staël's book on Germany, and while discussing it I observed that she had given an exaggerated description of the honesty of the Germans, by which foreigners might be misled. He laughed, and said: "Yes, of course, they won't chain their luggage, and it will be cut loose." But then he added, seriously: "But if one would realize the dishonesty of the Germans in all its magnitude one should make the acquaintance of German literature."—True! but of all the dishonesties of German literature the most infuriating is the time-serving of alleged philosophers, who are actually obscurantists.

ARTHUR SCHOPENHAUER, 1836

German versus Hun

I should be thankful if plagiarism were the greatest dishonesty which defiles German literature; but there are many others, much more deeply rooted and more pernicious, compared to which plagiarism is more or less what pocket-picking is to the capital crimes. I mean that base contemptuous spirit which makes personal interest the lodestar, whereas it should be the truth, and which under the mask of examination furthers a tendentious opinion.

ARTHUR SCHOPENHAUER, 1836



The first virtue of the Germans is a certain fidelity, a ponderous but touchingly magnanimous fidelity. The German does battle for the worst of causes if he has received earnest-money, or if he has merely promised his support in a state of intoxication; he fights, in such cases, with a heartfelt sigh, but he fights; though his better conviction may utter its protest in his heart, he cannot bring himself to desert the colours, least of all if his party is in danger, or perhaps encircled by a hostile and superior power.

HEINRICH HEINE, 1837



The knightly principle of honour is often the safe asylum, in the great man, of dishonesty and wickedness, in the little man of impudence, inconsiderateness and boorishness, inasmuch as a vast number of very offensive tricks are tolerated in silence, just because no one cares to risk his neck in reprimanding them. Accordingly, we see that the duel is most in fashion, and is practised with bloodthirsty solemnity, in that very nation which has betrayed its lack of true honesty in political and financial affairs: as for its place in private intercourse, one has only to ask those who have experience of it. But as for their urbanity and good social form, these have long been famous as a negative pattern.

ARTHUR SCHOPENHAUER, 1851

German "Honesty"

The German scholar is also so poor that he cannot be honest and honourable. Hence his habit and his method is to twist and turn, accommodating himself to circumstances, denying his own convictions, teaching and writing what he does not believe, creeping, flattering, taking sides and making friends; having respect for ministers, dignitaries, professors, students, booksellers, critics—in short, for anything rather than the truth and the good of others. And thus he usually becomes a circumspect rascal. As a consequence of this, dishonesty has so far won the upper hand, in German literature in general and philosophy in particular, that there is reason to hope it will soon reach a point when it will become ineffectual, as no longer capable of deceiving anyone.

ARTHUR SCHOPENHAUER, 1851



I have had many and various bitter experiences, and the old faith, or superstitious belief, in German honesty has in my case shrunk to very small proportions. I cannot deny that at one time, during my residence in France, I was very often the victim of this superstition. Curiously enough, among the swindlers whose acquaintance I unfortunately made, to my cost, was only a single Frenchman, and this swindler was a native of one of those German districts which were once torn from the German Empire, and whose return is now demanded by our patriots. If I were to prepare, by the ethnographical method of Leporello, an illustrated list of the various rogues who emptied my pockets, all civilized countries would, of course, be adequately represented, but the palm would remain with the Fatherland, which has produced the most incredible specimens.

HEINRICH HEINE, 1854

It is characteristic that a certain sentimentality always adheres to our German rascals. They are not coldly intelligent rogues, but sensitive scoundrels. They have a heart;

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they feel the warmest sympathy for the fate of those whom they have robbed, and one cannot get rid of them.

HEINRICH HEINE, 1854



They make a convenience of one another, these German authors. If only they would have the honesty to name the originals!

KARL VON HOLTEI, 1866



Anyone who lives among the Germans must consider himself fortunate indeed if he can find one who has kept himself aloof from that self-deception and colour-blindness which the Germans love and almost revere as a virtue.

FRIEDRICH NIETZSCHE, 1882-1888



One likes to attribute to oneself the virtues which one does not possess: hence the legend of German fidelity and honesty. Our worthy ancestor, Hermann the Cheruscan, cheated the Romans just as Bismarck cheated his adversary, and Heinrich von Kleist made Varus exclaim: "So one may have fair hair and blue eyes and yet be false as a Carthaginian!" A Roman author states expressly that on all the wide earth there is no more cunning and underhand people.

KARL BLEIBTREU, 1904



It is sincerity in which we are most lacking, and in the long run it is this that might be most profitable to us.

COUNT ROBERT ZEDLITZ-TRÜTZSCHLER, 1905



Lies—official, officious and born of servility—they no longer content us. Never and nowhere, neither in the Byzantium of the Palaeologi nor in the empire of Eugénie, have all events of national importance been so impudently, so disreputably, so persistently distorted as with us.

MAXIMILIAN HARDEN, 1907

XV

Land of the Oak-Tree and the Dullard!

Truth to confess, it seems to me that all that happens in Germany is now as crazy as though the Germans were Germans no longer.

ELIZABETH OF ORLEANS, 1652-1722



One may be sure that in the whole country no one has died for joy for five hundred years.

GEORG CHRISTOPH LICHTENBERG, 1742-1799

The Germans read too much. Also, as they do not want to discover anything for the second time, they learn to regard everything as their forefathers did. But the second fault is assuredly worse than the first.

GEORG CHRISTOPH LICHTENBERG, 1742-1799

In Germany they have at last come to believe that a man cannot have a head at all unless he sometimes stands on it.

GEORG CHRISTOPH LICHTENBERG, 1775

Say, is there any country other than Germany where people learn to turn up their noses rather than wipe them?

GEORG CHRISTOPH LICHTENBERG, 1775



When we read the anecdotes from England and France with which we are favoured from time to time, we might well believe that it is only in these happy realms that people with passions exist. One never reads the least little anecdote of

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us poor Germans, and from the silence of our authors foreigners must conclude that we move only mechanically, and that eating, drinking, tedious labour, and sleep constitute the whole orbit of a German, in which he runs round and round stupidly until he turns giddy and tumbles down and dies. Still, if one wishes to deduce the character of one's nation a little more prudence is required than we poor Germans enjoy, when every striking line dashed off by the pen of an open-minded writer may open the way for us to the society of convicts.

CHRISTIAN FRIEDRICH DANIEL SCHUBART, 1775



Dream not of liberty, so long as we
At every nod cry out like Caesar's slaves:

"Against the life of a brother, even against a mother
If he command, we strike, tho' the hand rebel at the blow."

HELPFERTH PETER STURZ, 1736-1779



Our people were accused of pedantry, because we had a host of petty and ponderous commentators. In order not to be considered pedantic one straightway proceeds to become superficial.

FREDERICK THE GREAT, 1780



The Saxons of Electoral Saxony are not the most amiable of our countrymen, but the Dresdeners are positively a shallow, desiccated, intolerable folk, with whom one is never at one's ease. They creep into worldly positions, and the free, noble-minded man is lost to sight among the hungry citizens. . . . Sometimes one meets a blurred impression, or rather a ruin, which once upon a time had a heart or mind. But the deadly conditions have crushed and consumed both.

FRIEDRICH SCHILLER, 1788

Land of the Oak-Tree and the Dullard!

The dwelling of the Mecklenburg nobleman seems to me like the den of a beast of prey, which ravages all about it and surrounds itself with the silence of the grave.

FREIHERR VOM STEIN, 1802



Our fundamental fault is indifferent good-nature; that is, tolerant, apathetic asininity. We note how other nations occupy themselves, and even discuss the pros and cons, but that is enough for us.

JOHANN GOTTFRIED HERDER, 1744-1803



Germany is nothing, but every individual German is much, and yet the latter imagines precisely the contrary.

WOLFGANG GOETHE, 1808



The following is really a symbol of German mediocrity in the good and the bad sense. Almost all countries have had to lend their name—to say nothing of their soil—to a malady; we have an English sickness, a Polish sickness, a Hungarian sickness; and we have one disease which has, as it were, four national godfathers—French, American, Spanish and Neapolitan; but no German disease. On the other hand, there is no New Germany, although there is a New France, a New England, a New Spain, etc. JEAN PAUL FR. RICHTER, 1809



The empty repetition of others' opinions, unfortunately, on this side of the Rhine, in the land in which intellectual thoroughness and profundity are supposed to be native, has become something more than the correct fashion.

ERNST MORITZ ARNDT, 1813

German versus Hun

A German need not be old before he find himself forsaken by his pupils; no intellectual peers succeed to him; everyone who feels himself to be someone begins all over again.

WOLFGANG GOETHE, 1814



Germany, who from of old has hatched all manner of superstitions.

JOSEPH GOERRES, 1814



In society the German seldom appears as a man—that is, as a fellow creature—but as a respectable official, a professor, a soldier. Just as the cooper, according to the rules of his trade, may not go even three doors from his workshop without the cooper's hammer, driver, adze or other tool, so we do not care to show ourselves in society without our judicial or medical or other paraphernalia in our hand, as though to advertise our trade. Hence the professor is the most delightful companion—among professors; and so is everyone, before the open shop-window of his trade. Thus youthful liberty and pliability grow mature, and the versatility and cosmopolitanism of our writing at last, through long practice, become one-sidedness in actual life.

JEAN PAUL FR. RICHTER, 1817



I listen to Beneken's lectures on the old German tongue with great pleasure. Think of it, Fritz: only 9 (nine) students are attending this course. Among 1,300 students, of whom 1,000 are certainly German, there are only 9 who are interested in the language, the inner life, and the intellectual relics of their fathers. O Germany, land of the oak-tree and the dullard!

HEINRICH HEINE (Göttingen), 1820

Among the Germans it is easier to be forgotten than to become famous, especially now: they have so luxuriated in

Land of the Oak-Tree and the Dullard!

emotional ecstasies that violent means alone can stimulate them: just as they do not feel thoroughly convivial unless one addresses them with a chair-leg.

HEINRICH HEINE, 1822



When Luden, in his excellent *History of Germany*, said of our fatherland: "It is one of the fairest countries greeted by the sun in his eternal course. Delighting the gaze, cheering and uplifting the heart, Germany brings forth all that man needs for sustenance, and all that the soul can demand"—he was certainly thinking of sauerkraut. LUDWIG BÖRNE, 1828

As in England the division of labour, so with us the division of pleasure is carried to extremes. People amuse themselves in homoeopathic fashion: a barrel of boredom contains a tiny drop of diversion. LUDWIG BÖRNE, 1830

In Germany they have discovered the secret of maintaining stupidity in a state of eternally blooming youth.

LUDWIG BÖRNE, 1831



We are over-populated, have manufactured too much, produced too much, are overfed, have dehumanized our officials with pen and ink, have deprived the administration of its soul, and have resolved everything into a lifeless mechanism!

FREIHERR VOM STEIN, 1757-1831



(*Of University life in Germany*)

Every species of enthusiasm is here mortified on principle, and guided into the rut of a pedantic *bravura*, which is distinguished only by its aridity and its affected insensibility. To get drunk and to get into debt, in the most cold-blooded

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fashion, without the least spark of humour, is valued almost as highly as the valour of the duellist.

RICHARD WAGNER, 1831



If a German wanted at any price to reach an advanced age he could not do anything more expedient than to fire a blank cartridge at a prince. However long he lived, he would never be executed. Not because his guilt and his evil intentions were doubted for a moment; this doubt would not save his head for a single day. But the threads of the conspiracy would be traced so long and so extensively that before those who had travelled to the ends of the earth and the antipodes in search of accomplices could return a whole generation would have died. Millions of Germans would be examined and the depositions of the whole nation would be taken.

LUDWIG BÖRNE, 1833



In Germany the opinions of coteries are brutally forced upon the nation—doing violence to its nature, as is shown by the chopping and changing.

FRANZ GRILLPARZER, 1836



With pride a German may declare that only on German soil can fools spring up to that titanic stature of which a shallow, prematurely stunted French fool has not the faintest notion. Germany alone engenders these colossal zanies, whose jesters' cap reaches to the heavens, delighting the stars with its tinkling! Let us not undervalue the merits of our compatriots, and do homage to alien folly! Let us not be unjust to our own fatherland!

HEINRICH HEINE, 1837



In Germany the endeavour to be somebody, if only to the outward view, has already corrupted many a noble spirit,

Land of the Oak-Tree and the Dullard!

has sacrificed many a talent to base purposes, and is still working mischief every day.

HOFFMANN VON FALLERSLEBEN, 1844



The real censorship in Germany, whose oppression is felt everywhere, is that of the limited national mentality. One must everywhere flee into the wilderness in order to escape from it; and in order to liberate it one must introduce alien elements.

ARNOLD RUGE, 1846



Our great passions, ligatured by philosophical and poetical habits of observation and reflection, have shrunk to caricatures of themselves, and the little ones flourish all the more lustily; above all the dwarfish ape Vanity straddles and struts in full possession over their giant, paralysed limbs.

OTTO LUDWIG, 1846–1859



In Germany the house is not yet built merely because every stone wants to mean something of itself.

FRIEDRICH HEBBEL, 1847–1858



The Germans are a peculiar people: when all is going well with one they worry one to death; when one stands on the brink of the grave they show sympathy and compassion.

HEINRICH HEINE, 1851



In Germany every kind of stupidity in literature and every kind of bad behaviour in life finds swarms of imitators, and no one dares to stand on his own legs.

ARTHUR SCHOPENHAUER, 1851

Of them (the Germans) Thomas Hood (*Up the Rhine*) says: “For a musical people they are the noisiest I ever met with.”

German versus Hun

That they are so is not because they are fonder of noise than other peoples; it is explained by the insensitiveness, arising from obtuseness, of those who have to listen to noise, who are not disturbed in their thinking or reading, simply because they do not think but merely smoke, which is their substitute for thinking. The general toleration of unnecessary noise—for example, the extremely ill-mannered and general banging of doors—is simply a sign of the general dullness and empty-headedness. In Germany it really seems as though things were so ordered that no one should be able to come to his senses for noise: for example, the aimless banging of drums.

ARTHUR SCHOPENHAUER, 1851

At the sound of certain words—such as Justice, Liberty, Goodness, Being, etc.—the German becomes quite dizzy; he immediately falls into a sort of delirium, and begins to indulge in unmeaning, high-sounding phrases.

ARTHUR SCHOPENHAUER, 1851



Strange! We Germans are the strongest and cleverest people. Our princely families sit on all the thrones, our Rothschilds dominate all the exchanges of the world, our learned men are supreme in all branches of knowledge; we invented gunpowder and the printing-press—and yet, if one of us fires a pistol he has to pay a fine of three talers, and if we want to announce in the *Hamburger Korrespondent* that “my beloved wife has given birth to a little daughter, lovely as liberty!” Herr Doctor Hoffmann reaches for his red pencil and strikes out the word “liberty”!

HEINRICH HEINE, 1852



These capitals, great and small, in which the original features of the German municipality become extinguished, are the hydrocephalic brains of modern civilization. Hydrocephaly, as we know, often indicates a hectic and premature psychic

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life. But one will not therefore conclude that the biggest heads are always the cleverest and most viable.

W. H. RIEHL, 1854



The German nation distributes its laurels as Ophelia her flowers.

FRIEDRICH HEBBEL, 1856



The Germans' old enthusiasm for the beautiful has not reawakened.

HEINRICH VON TREITSCHKE, 1860



As true virtuosi of Philistinism, the Germans have nothing to learn in respect of narrow-mindedness, whether in life or perception or judgement; and if one tries to lift them up to the sublimer things they make themselves heavy as lead: and as leaden weights they hang upon their truly great men, in order to drag them down out of the ether, to the level of their own wretched poverty.

FRIEDRICH NIETZSCHE, 1872

Wander through a German city—all convention, compared with the national character of foreign cities, reveals itself in the negative: all is colourless, outworn, badly copied, negligent; each follows his own fancy, yet not a vigorous fancy, but rather what once the general taste, and then the general convenience, prescribed. An article of clothing, whose design required no mental effort, an article borrowed from abroad and imitated as carelessly as possible, is at once regarded by the Germans as a contribution to German costume. Their disregard of the sense of form is positively ironical—for they have a keen enough sense of content: are they not famed, as a nation, for their introspection?

FRIEDRICH NIETZSCHE, 1873-1874

German versus Hun

In Germany everyone takes his affairs seriously; but they laugh at the man who claims that he alone is in earnest.

FRIEDRICH NIETZSCHE, 1874



All depends on the man—and in nothing is Germany so poor as in men; and to no one is Germany so hostile, with her adoration of the State, public opinion, *Kultur*, and success, as to him on whom alone her life and her honour depend—the individual human being.

PAUL ANTON DE LAGARDE, 1875



In Germany men think to achieve everything by education, method, schooling; a sign that the nation is lacking in men of character and pioneer natures, since at all ages its paths are laid down for it. FRIEDRICH NIETZSCHE, 1876-1879



Bavaria raised the most boorish officials.

JOHANN SCHERR, 1880



The German of the new Empire is becoming more and more ripe for the feeling which its Chancellor described, in not precisely classical language, as general indifference: and no one will be inclined to assert that this feeling contributes to the formation of character.

PAUL ANTON DE LAGARDE, 1881



Enthusiasm itself is worth less in Germany than elsewhere, for it is unfruitful. FRIEDRICH NIETZSCHE, 1881

In Germany *would* is honoured far above *could*; which is the very soil for the imperfect and pretentious.

FRIEDRICH NIETZSCHE, 1882-1884

Land of the Oak-Tree and the Dullard!

In Germany there has always been a deficiency of intellect, and thus the mediocre thinkers attain the highest honours, for even they are rare. FRIEDRICH NIETZSCHE, 1882-1888

The Germans are again boasting of their famous “German virtue,” of which history has absolutely no knowledge.

FRIEDRICH NIETZSCHE, 1882-1888

The German intellect has in all ages been deficient in psychological subtlety and divination; and today, when Germany is bursting with noisy patriotism and self-admiration, one can see it growing denser and coarser as one looks.

FRIEDRICH NIETZSCHE, 1887

For a long while past Germany has been so poor in great souls, in mighty spirits, that she seems to have forgotten what a great soul, a mighty spirit is; and today, almost with a good conscience, and quite without embarrassment, mediocre and even useless men enter the market-place, commanding themselves as great men and reformers.

FRIEDRICH NIETZSCHE, 1887

That *every* sort of humbug enjoys a certain degree of success in modern Germany is attributable to the now quite undeniable and always evident sterilization of the German mentality, for whose cause I look to an all-too exclusive diet of newspapers, politics, beer and Wagnerian music.

FRIEDRICH NIETZSCHE, 1887

What the “higher schools” of Germany actually achieve is a brutal system of training a number of young men with as little loss of time as possible to be of use and profit in the service of the State. FRIEDRICH NIETZSCHE, 1888



Goethe, who is revered by the Germans of today theoretically rather than practically, could not endure people

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with spectacles. But Germany is now full of actual and spiritual spectacle-wearers. JULIUS LANGBEHN, 1890

In Germany people think it very important "to give the child a name"; often so important that the child itself is forgotten. JULIUS LANGBEHN, 1890

The imagination of the Greeks saw and sought man in Nature: the imagination of the Germans seeks and finds him in history. JULIUS LANGBEHN, 1890



Why this importunate parvenu-like insistence upon their own merits? Or is it perhaps that there is really nothing in particular to recommend?

COUNT ROBERT ZEDLITZ-TRÜTZSCHLER, 1905



German courtesy sounds more uncouth than an insult in other languages. FRANK WEDEKIND, 1908



In Germany two men constitute a society. If one dies the other rises from his place as a sign of mourning.

KARL KRAUS, 1909

In German coffee I have noted an exaggerated obsequiousness toward milk; it turns pale if the latter merely approaches it. This might also serve as a symbol of the relation of the sexes in this country. KARL KRAUS, 1909



To everyone who will consider the passionately active intercourse among the leading intellects of Germany at the time of the Reformation, the picture presented by the intellectual life of Germany during the last twenty years will seem like

Land of the Oak-Tree and the Dullard!

a group of Stylites and anchorites. Have the means of communication become so worn, or is this due to the sublimity and perfection of our intellects?

FRANK WEDEKIND, 1910



We value good character more than a wide province, obedience more than independence and intelligence. Zeal we value more than calmness and the simple doing of one's duty, and then we wonder why we have so many place-hunters and Byzantines. The great Talleyrand was perhaps right when he said: "Surtout pas trop de zèle!"

COUNT ROBERT ZEDLITZ-TRÜTZSCHLER, 1910



I can prove that the Germans are still a nation of poets and thinkers. I possess a roll of toilet-paper, produced in Berlin, which contains on every sheet a quotation from a classic in keeping with the situation.

KARL KRAUS, 1915



German uneasiness roars at the heavens like an ox in a lion's fell. Even people who, in a restricted circle, are quite bearable citizens, feel that they must imitate Bramarbas directly they appear before a wider public.

RICHARD DEHMEL, 1916



We have become the slaves of history; we have set the knowledge of the history of civilizations in the place of civilizing energy, and we have placed life under the dictatorship of learning.

KARL SCHEFFLER, 1916



We were once the people of poets and thinkers; we became the people of rhetorical expressions, of inflated phrases.

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Ideals disappeared; the soulless commands issued from above suppressed all inward liberty. Not good, honest work, but recognition in the form of titles and orders became the essential thing. So the *Siegesallee* came into existence, and the Berlin mass-production style, from which we shall not recover in a hundred years. MAXIMILIAN HARDEN, 1918



Our misfortune was the fact that our moral being was not firm and independent. We had so adjusted ourselves that we did our duty with regularity, and we had so organized our duty that it could be performed with regularity; we had mechanized even morality. PAUL ERNST, 1921



The German virtue is dissection; dissection to the very marrow; German development proceeds by fits and starts; epochs of wealth and flourishing growth end suddenly in a desert; great events are incomprehensibly far apart; there is a lack of mediacy, of transition, between moving parts, so that a dead limb is riveted to a living member, and caste is divided from caste by unclimbable walls.

JAKOB WASSERMANN, 1921

There is no centre (to Germany), and there has never been one; the four centuries of the united Empire did not even create an administrative centre. The artist, the author, unless he could be turned into a subordinate official, was a lost individuality, and his position depended upon the accident of economic success. One stratum of society damns what another praises; traditions crumble overnight; cultivation destroys culture, erudition destroys doctrine, sentiment destroys sense, success destroys consecutiveness, flirtation destroys love, industriousness destroys impulse.

JAKOB WASSERMANN, 1921

Land of the Oak-Tree and the Dullard!

Fragment by fragment, person by person, city by city, State by State, German life coheres without a central point. The Frenchman has only to write Paris, and he has, enclosed in a verbal nut, a monstrous complex of events and their unfolding. Before the Englishman lies a highway laid down centuries ago: his public and private life are subject to unalterable conventions. The German alone must extemporize if he wishes to represent social cohesion and articulation, or society itself, or destiny in relation to society.

JAKOB WASSERMANN, 1921



In Germany the importance of the spoken word is often undervalued. Without possessing the Faustian genius, or any particular gifts whatsoever, many a German Philistine echoes the words of Faust: "I cannot rate the worth of words so high."

PRINCE BÜLOW, 1921-1926

When King Edward VII arrived in Friedrichshof on the 25th of February, 1901, on his way to visit the Kaiser in Homburg, he was in a very serious mood. He said to me: "The people here really seem to be crazy. Don't the people in Germany ever take things quietly? They seem to be cracked; they are like madmen."

PRINCE BÜLOW, 1921-1926



We became the materialistic people of an increasingly materialistic age. It was perhaps merely to palliate this psychic change that we appealed to that German idealism which a hundred years before had been our glory in the eyes of the world. But we were impervious even to this. We were just like posthumous sons, who felt that they had done their duty if they took academic care of their inheritance.

MÖLLER VAN DEN BRUCK, 1922

German versus Hun

We have, of course, an intellectual aristocracy, but it is poor in energy. ADOLF HITLER, 1923 (Speech in Munich)



After the founding of the German Empire we fell into a period of crass materialism. Just as the endless tenement-houses of the growing German capitals, and the decadence of architecture, date from this period, so German thought as a whole became purely materialistic. The same period saw the growth of that commercial snobbery which thought itself superior to the obligation of taking part in the intellectual life of Germany.

GUSTAV STRESEMANN, 1927

The German love of work degenerated into a material craze for industry, which began to dispense with the hours of intellectual recreation.

GUSTAV STRESEMANN, 1927



A real society, such as the Romanic peoples almost always possessed, has never existed in the Germanic countries, and least of all in Germany. There was never on German soil a universal aesthetic of public life, a general art of deportment, of urbanity, of conversation, a general purity and amenity of speech, writing and taste.

EGON FRIEDELL, 1929



There is assuredly no civilized people that knows less of its history than the Germans, or succumbs with greater pleasure to the patriotic legend.

RUDOLF OLDEN, 1935

It is true that the darkness which oppressed our country frequently showed Eastern characteristics, but it was autochthonous, for it was always present in our own East, in the land beyond the Elbe.

RUDOLF OLDEN, 1935

Land of the Oak-Tree and the Dullard!

Enmities, the most passionate enmities, may exist in any nation, and in his rage a man may strike his fellow dead. But in Germany there is something much more terrible. Everywhere but in Germany the adversaries recognize one another on the field of battle. They recognize one another as brother recognizes brother. . . . But in Germany we have this frightful state of things, that this natural, living bond between human beings is wanting. ERICH KAHLER, 1937

Two Germans of different opinion are as alien to each other as any two creatures in God's wide world.

ERICH KAHLER, 1937



I had always the impression that society, or at least our German society, in its zeal for subordination, demoralizes its rulers and its darlings, forcing them to make grievous misuse of their superiority, so that in the end neither party could possibly have any joy of it. THOMAS MANN, 1939

XVI

Words of Bitterness

O my Germany, how thou dost grieve my heart! Woe, that in our fatherland the pyres should blaze instead of truth!

FRIEDRICH VON SPEE, 1631

The evil is most widespread in Germany, and in very truth the roasting, singeing and burning has for some time been so great in our beloved Germany that we have abated our honour not a little in the eyes of foreign enemies, and have made ourselves to stink in their nostrils; other nations and peoples are herein greatly more cautious and we should be justly ashamed thereof.

FRIEDRICH VON SPEE, 1631

I am ashamed of Germany.

FRIEDRICH VON SPEE, 1631

Is this blindness of the Germans not a pitiful thing?

FRIEDRICH VON SPEE, 1631

O Germany, what art thou doing? Is it not then a pitiful thing that one may not speak of what is being done by those who rule?

FRIEDRICH VON SPEE, 1631



Ungrateful fatherland!

JOHANN JOACHIM WINCKELMANN, 1766

How the Germans wallow in the mire, and seek to eat acorns, though they have bread! . . .

JOHANN JOACHIM WINCKELMANN, 1767

Words of Bitterness

But that we should be banished to this worst portion of the globe! One lives only once upon this earth, and is expected to content himself with the sorriest place upon it.

FRIEDRICH SCHILLER, 1789



I began to despise them all in my heart, and it seemed to me as though the whole nation were trying quite deliberately to prostitute itself to me through its deputies. They seemed to me, on the whole, so deceitful, so ill-bred, so badly educated, so empty of pleasant characteristics, so tasteless. Often I cried; I do not believe a German can lace a shoe unless he has learned how to do so from a foreign nation.

WOLFGANG GOETHE, 1796



Your Germans are very ready to put up with the barest necessities, and this is why you find so much botched work among them, and so little that is free and truly agreeable. Yet one could put up with this, if only such people were not insensitive to all the beauty of life, and if the curse of God-forsaken unnaturalness did not everywhere rest upon such a people.

FRIEDRICH HÖLDERLIN, 1799

The virtues of the Germans are a showy evil, and nothing more; they are but the necessary achievement, extorted, with slavish toil and sullen fear, from the barren breast: and they leave disconsolate every pure soul that would fain make the beautiful its pasture; which, accustomed to the sacred harmony of nobler natures, cannot endure the discord that shrieks aloud in all the lifeless order of these people.

FRIEDRICH HÖLDERLIN, 1799

If they were but modest, these people; if they only did not make themselves a law for the better among them! If only

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they did not rail against what they are not—yet, after all, they might rail away if only they did not mock the Divine!

FRIEDRICH HÖLDERLIN, 1799

“All things on earth imperfect are,” is the time-honoured song of the Germans. If only someone would one day tell these God-forsaken people that all things are so imperfect only because they leave nothing pure uncorrupted, nothing sacred untouched by their clumsy hands; that nothing thrives with them because they do not regard the root of prosperity, divine Nature; so that with them life is indeed empty and heavy with care and over-full of cold, dumb discord, because they despise the genius that power and nobility bring to human achievement, and cheerfulness to suffering, and love and brotherhood to our cities and our homes.

And this is why they fear death so sorely, and suffer all disgrace for the sake of their molluscan life, because they know nothing higher than their own botched and clumsy performances.

FRIEDRICH HÖLDERLIN, 1799

Woe to the stranger who wanders for love of wandering and comes to such a people! And threefold woe to him who, like myself, driven onward by a great sorrow, a beggar like myself, comes to such a people!

FRIEDRICH HÖLDERLIN, 1799



I am so weary of the impudent bungling that is now evident in every department that I no longer care to look out of the window; so weary that even the Germans in their misfortune seem to me ridiculous, because the actual cause of their despair is simply that they have to stop their drivelling.

WOLFGANG GOETHE, 1809

These fools of Germans are still shrieking against egoism; and would to God one had long ago provided honourably

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for oneself and one's dependants, and then for one's neighbours, and again for one's neighbours; then perhaps all would have seemed different!

WOLFGANG GOETHE, 1809

The public, and in particular the German public, is a foolish caricature of the *demos*; it really imagines that it can contrive a kind of instance, a kind of senate, and . . . vote out of existence anything that does not please it.

WOLFGANG GOETHE, 1809



We remain what we were; if people laugh at us and ridicule us, even if they scorn and despise us, we thank them submissively and join in the laughter.

JOHANN GOTTFRIED HERDER, 1744-1803



No distinctions have come my way; since I have not received the distinction which I deserve any other would be an affront to me; and I should despise myself if I thought otherwise.

DAVID VON SCHARNHORST, 1813



For such an accursed people one ought to preserve the gifts of God in spirit, so that they could compare them on occasion and subordinate one to another.

WOLFGANG GOETHE, 1816

It is not only through passionate opposition, but also through inadmissible associations that we have gone astray; and together with the most singular vacillation a melancholy phenomenon appears in Germany; namely, that everyone believes himself to be justified, without any sort of grounding, in the acceptance or refusal of ideas, whereby a spirit of contradiction and a war of all against all is awakened.

WOLFGANG GOETHE, 1816

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I do not know what will become of our fatherland: it is all worm-eaten, rotten and cowardly within, and will endure no criticism, and has not the sense to respect and value free speech.

JOSEPH GOERRES, 1817



Here everyone has to live like a departed spirit.

HEINRICH HEINE (Göttingen), 1820



This country (Austria) seems to be no place for me, and yet I would do and suffer anything rather than leave it. The rest of Germany, in its present state of impotent and hectic excitement, disgusts me unspeakably, and Austria (or rather its inhabitants) is infinitely precious to me.

FRANZ GRILLPARZER, 1822



Daily I curse Arminius and the battle in the Teutoburg forest. If this had not occurred we should now all be Romans, and we should speak Latin.

HEINRICH HEINE, 1824

Good God! I have just made the discovery that all the people in Germany are geniuses, and I, just I, am the only one who is *not* a genius.

HEINRICH HEINE, 1825



Even we others, in central Germany, have had to purchase our little bit of wisdom dearly enough. For, after all, we are all of us leading a wretched and isolated existence.

WOLFGANG GOETHE, 1827



How wretchedly the fatherland provides for us!

WILHELM WAIBLINGER, 1829

Words of Bitterness

Only in youth is one a true citizen of the world. I too have been young; but since I left the land of phantasy, since I have lived in Germany, I have been most horribly bored.

LUDWIG BÖRNE, 1830

Oh, how angry I am! Do send me, some time or other, a parcel of German soil, that I may swallow it! Apart from the fact that it is good for acidity of the stomach, I can at least, in this way, symbolically destroy and embrace the accursed land.

LUDWIG BÖRNE, 1830

It is too depressing! No hope that Germany will be free until the best of her living philosophers, theologians and historians are locked up and the writings of the dead ones burned. . . .

LUDWIG BÖRNE, 1831



German indifference is really of such a quality that it baffles all calculation.

GEORG BÜCHNER, 1833



Is there anywhere a more revolting, more undignified apparition than that of the German philistine, who, having fallen out of a hot fever into a cold, stuffs cotton-wool into his ears in order to keep the thousand voices of life at bay!

FRIEDRICH HEBBEL, 1839-1840



You threaten me, saying that I may be cast out of the German nation. Have you ever heard of anyone threatening to cast a man out of prison?

ARNOLD RUGE, 1844



It is a wretched country, and a certain Ruge is right when he says: "The German is a scurvy fellow."

RICHARD WAGNER, 1863

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If one wished to be bitter, one might ask whether in the whole wide land of Germany there is not a single soul to protest against the good fortune of being the heir of five thousand years or more? Of what use to the nation are these book-keeper-and-warehouseman existences, which, incapable even of feeling the lack of the most necessary possessions—liberty, unity, religion—can only be set in motion if someone tugs at them from in front and at the same time gets his servants to push at them from behind?

PAUL ANTON DE LAGARDE, 1875



Get to know Germany and the German public! All, all is lost there.

RICHARD WAGNER, 1877

As for Germany and the state of affairs there, I am absolutely without hope.

RICHARD WAGNER, 1880



Yes, you have succeeded in driving the gods into exile.
have a care, as to how far and whither your idols take you!

JOHANNES SCHERR, 1882



For the rest, I confess that I feel myself too alien to the “German spirit” of today to regard its individual idiosyncrasies without a great deal of impatience.

FRIEDRICH NIETZSCHE, 1887

Here nothing shall hinder me from being rude enough to tell the Germans a few harsh truths: who else will do so?—I am speaking of their prostitution *in historicis*. It is not only that the German historians have quite lost the large view of the progress and the values of civilization; that they are all the zanies of politics (or of the Church); they have even outlawed this large view. Before all else one must be

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“German”; one must belong to a “race”; then one can sit in judgement on all the values and politics *in historicis*.

FRIEDRICH NIETZSCHE, 1888

The “German spirit” is to me a suffocating atmosphere: I breathe with difficulty in the neighbourhood of this psychological uncleanliness, now an instinct, which is revealed in every word and expression of a German.

FRIEDRICH NIETZSCHE, 1888

It is even part of my ambition to be known as a detractor *par excellence* of the Germans. My distrust of the German character I expressed when I was only six-and-twenty. For me the Germans are impossible. If I try to excogitate a species of human being who runs counter to all my instincts, it always turns out to be a German! FRIEDRICH NIETZSCHE, 1888

The Germans are riff-raff—Oh, but they are so good-natured. . . . One lowers oneself by intercourse with the Germans.

FRIEDRICH NIETZSCHE, 1888



After the war I shall go among the Social Democrats, and look about me for lamp-posts—but a very large number of lamp-posts. For a whole hydra will have to be dealt with if things are to be any better.

ALFRED VON TIRPITZ, November 1914



Everywhere self-importance and conflict arising from personal ambition, envy, lust of power, lust of gain. I did *not* enter the war for *this* Germany; I would prefer to see it humbled; not, indeed, by a foreign Power, but by the might of our own people. It is the bitterest self-conquest, to be forced to go on fighting for a cause whose human futility one has recognized too late; to make common cause with

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people with whom one really has nothing in common but the tax-paper and the vocabulary. RICHARD DEHMEL, 1916



I am a German. I fold my hands. Yes, I know, I am living in Hell.

PAUL ERNST, 1921



It is quite foolish to turn the right cheek to them (the Germans) if the left has been struck. It does not make them hesitate for a moment; it does not move them; it does not disarm them; they strike the right cheek also. It is idle to seek an antidote to their venom. They simply brew more.

JAKOB WASSERMANN, 1921

It seems to me that (in Germany) it is only among the dead that justice may be had against the living. For what these do is absolutely unendurable.

JAKOB WASSERMANN, 1921

It is vain to conjure the nation of poets and thinkers in the name of its poets and thinkers. Every prejudice that one had thought abolished brings a thousand new ones to light, as carrion breeds maggots.

JAKOB WASSERMANN, 1921



What creatures we had become, after all, in the generation that preceded our collapse! What rigid, arthritic creatures, in whom all elasticity was dead! They were indurated in their objectivity, disciplined and bureaucratized until all suppleness was lost! Men who boasted of traditions and acted merely in accordance with convention!

MÖLLER VAN DEN BRUCK, 1922



But the painful truth is that from these events I have acquired the conviction that our leading social stratum has

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shown itself incapable of giving the German people the will
to liberty.

ERICH LUDENDORFF, 1923



This generation would promptly slaughter their own chil-
dren if they were required so to do by a philosophy armoured
with power and with scientific trimmings.

FRANZ WERFEL, 1939

XVII

Words of Admonition

One has to tell the Germans the truth as brutally as possible.

FRIEDRICH SCHILLER, 1799



The two chief evils in Germany, which ought to be remedied, are the *miles perpetuus*, and the impost, which is mainly on his account.

WILHELM HEINSE, 1793-1803



Would that the well-known story (of the three sons in Lessing's *Nathan the Wise*) might for all time remind the German public that it is incumbent upon it not only to perceive, but also to hear and understand. Would that the divine sense of tolerance and consideration expressed in this tale might be held sacred and precious by the nation!

WOLFGANG GOETHE, 1815



Born among preconceived opinions, educated in preconceived opinions, we struggle with preconceived opinions all our life. It is the duty of every citizen to free himself from preconceived opinions, these dead weights upon and limitations of the life of the State. Only in freedom is it possible to work for better things; without liberty, no virtue. How far are we now from liberty and virtue, how very far!

HOFFMANN VON FALLERSLEBEN, 1844



The Germans would do well to take holiday from their belauded empiricism and their handicrafts for as long as is

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necessary to study Kant's *Metaphysical Elements of Natural Science*, and for once in a way to have a clearance, not only in the laboratory, but in their heads.

ARTHUR SCHOPENHAUER, 1851



Don't let us allow the German introspection and profundity to go to our heads too much! RICHARD WAGNER, 1861



May Germany never believe that one can enter upon a new period of life without a new ideal. May she reflect that real life grows upward from below, not from above; that it is won, not given. PAUL ANTON DE LAGARDE, 1875



The German has militarized himself; now he must also civilize himself. JULIUS LANGBEHN, 1890



We are living in a state of transition! Germany is gradually growing out of childhood into adolescence. So it is high time that we got rid of our childish ailments!

KAISER WILHELM II, 1892



Let us beware lest we cultivate at home the imperialism of which we accuse others! The Pan-Germans, of course, extend the frontiers of the new world-empire to Morocco, Asia Minor, Brazil—and the professors of naval history do the same. EUGEN RICHTER, 1900



The talent for discipline is the root of Prussia's greatness. Would that she might develop this talent in a more and

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more refined form, and therefore yield precedence in regions where all depends on improvisation, ingenuity, originality.

CHRISTIAN MORGENSTERN, 1905



The will to truth must ensure that no one allows anything to be said of others before he is certain that his own doorstep is absolutely clean.

DR. KURT SCHUSCHNIGG, 1936

XVIII

Does Anyone Know what is German?

There is today a certain class of people, mostly young writers, who almost always utter the word *German* with dilated nostrils. A sure sign that among these people even patriotism is an imitation.

GEORG CHRISTOPH LICHTENBERG, 1772-1775



It is really as though the Germans believed that God spoke only German to Adam. JEAN PAUL FR. RICHTER, 1763-1825

The Germans now love the German in the Germans more than ever. JEAN PAUL FR. RICHTER, 1808



Is it the truth that it is in the very nature of the German to be without style? Or is it a sign of his unfinished character? Perhaps the truth is this: that what is German is not yet plainly evident. FRIEDRICH NIETZSCHE, 1873

The German character is simply not yet in evidence; it has still to become; at some time or other it will have to be born, so that it may be visible to all and honest with itself. But every birth is violent and painful. FRIEDRICH NIETZSCHE, 1873

There are actually people who think that they have honoured a thing by calling it German. This is the acme of national stupidity and impudence.

FRIEDRICH NIETZSCHE, 1876-1879

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Virtue was not invented by the Germans. Goethe's distinction and lack of envy, Beethoven's noble and solitary resignation, Mozart's charm and emotional grace, Handel's inflexible manliness and freedom within the law, Bach's confident and enlightened inner life, which did not even need to renounce fame and success—are these then German qualities? If not, they at least show what Germans should strive for, and what they can achieve.

FRIEDRICH NIETZSCHE, 1879

To be a good German means to de-Germanize oneself. National differences are found in many more things than have hitherto been realized, but they are mainly due to different stages of culture, with a minimum of permanent difference. It is for this reason that all argument in respect of the national character has so little cogency for one who is labouring for the *regeneration* of convictions—that is, for civilization. For example, if one considers all that has been German, one will immediately cap the theoretical question: what is German? by the counter-question: what is German now?

FRIEDRICH NIETZSCHE, 1879

It is characteristic of the Germans that among them the question "What is German?" is never silent.

FRIEDRICH NIETZSCHE, 1885

To think as a German, to feel as a German—I can do most things, but this is beyond my powers.

FRIEDRICH NIETZSCHE, 1887



The Romans described the various tribes beyond the frontier by the general name of "Germans," concerning whose meaning there has been much debate. Apparently it is of Celtic origin, and must be taken to mean "Men of the War-cry" or "Shouters in the Fight" or "Neighbours." The

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word *Deutsch* came much later; it did not make its appearance before the 9th century, and only in the 12th century did it gain general acceptance, and it means "speaking the popular tongue."

J. VON PFLUCK-HARTUNG, 1909



Does anyone know what is German? Then let him hide the knowledge in his bosom.

HANS W. FISCHER, 1921

A long, long time ago I once recommended that every one of our compatriots should be forbidden for two years to speak the word "German." Alas, I preached to deaf ears. People bleated and screamed and trumpeted the vocable into the world, so loudly and persistently that the other peoples could bear it no longer, and in order to avoid the deadly sound they said "Boche" or "Hun" instead. Degenerate words must be avoided.

HANS W. FISCHER, 1921



To the German, "Germany," since the day when it broke asunder, when a religious bond was snapped and no political bond replaced it, has always been problematical; he will always trace it rationally, will claim this or that for it, will examine and resolve it. Since he does not absolutely *live it*, he will try to *feel it*, and in order to feel it, he must make it the object of examination as to its fitness and usefulness; he must "verify" it.

FRANZ BLEI, 1924

XIX

German Culture

You know our Germany: it is still uncivilized.

JOHANN REUCHLIN, 1455-1522



Our worthy Germans are still only in the dawn of culture.

FREDERICK THE GREAT, 8 September, 1775



The German public has no longer the unity of the childish fancy, and still less the unity of a completed education. It is half-way between the two, and this is a glorious period for bad authors, but for that reason it is all the worse for those who do not merely want to earn money.

FRIEDRICH SCHILLER, 15 May, 1795

There is nothing cruder than the taste of the modern German public, and to work for the transformation of this miserable taste, instead of taking it as my model, is the serious design of my life.

FRIEDRICH SCHILLER, 3 August, 1795



The German forms and formalities are like the long clothes which, if one falls into the water, keep one up for a time, but then drag one down . . . I prefer a naked swimmer.

JEAN PAUL FR. RICHTER, 1808



Taste is a euphemism. Germans have no taste, because they have no euphemism and are too crude.

WOLFGANG GOETHE, 1813

German Culture

We Germans are of yesterday; it is true that in the last hundred years we have improved very greatly; but a few more centuries may have to pass before so much intellect and higher culture has made its way among our countrymen, and become general, that one will be able to say of them "it is a long time since they were barbarians."

WOLFGANG GOETHE, 1827



German culture has this peculiarity, that it is much too ready to diverge from a sound judgement and natural feeling.

FRANZ GRILLPARZER, 1836



The moral weakness of the Germans is the principal cause of the fact that they have no culture.

FRIEDRICH NIETZSCHE, 1873

One lives, at all events, in the belief that we have a genuine culture; the monstrous contrast between this satisfied and even triumphant belief and an obvious deficiency seems to be noted but rarely and by very few. For all who think on the lines of public opinion have bandaged their eyes and stopped their ears—for this contrast simply must not exist. But how can this be? What power is so mighty that it can prescribe such a "must not"? What race of men can have come into power in Germany, that it may forbid so strong and simple a feeling, or impede its expression? This power, this race of men I will call by its name: they are the *Kultur-Philistines*.

FRIEDRICH NIETZSCHE, 1873

There are now perhaps a hundred men more than there were a hundred years ago who know what poetry is; perhaps a hundred years hence there will again be a hundred more who have learned, in the meantime, what culture is, and that hither-

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to the Germans have had no culture, however they may talk and parade themselves. FRIEDRICH NIETZSCHE, 1873-1874

So now the modern German also believes in the *aeterna veritas* of his education, of his kind of culture; and yet this belief fails, as the Platonic State would have failed, once the lie is confronted with the truth that the German has no culture because by reason of his education he cannot have any. He wants the flower without the root and stem; so he wants in vain.

FRIEDRICH NIETZSCHE, 1873-1874

Many a time, when I have called someone's attention to the lack of a German culture, I have been answered with the objection: "But this lack is quite natural, for hitherto the Germans have been too poor and too modest. Wait until our countrymen are rich and self-conscious; then they will possess a culture!" Faith may always be a blessed thing, but *this* sort of faith makes me anything but happy, because I feel that this culture, in whose future the speaker believes—the culture of wealth, of polish, of polite hypocrisy—is the most hateful antithesis of the German culture in which I do believe. Assuredly, anyone who has to live among Germans suffers greatly from the notorious greyness of their life and their thoughts, from their formlessness, dullness and stupidity, and their uncouthness in the more intimate forms of intercourse; and even more from their envyfulness, and a certain slyness and uncleanliness of character; he is pained and affronted by the inveterate preference for the false and deceptive, by the bad imitations, by the translation of good foreign literature into a bad native idiom; but now, when to all these are added, as the worst of inflictions, the feverish unrest, the running after success and gain, and the over-estimation of the passing moment, it infuriates one to reflect that all these maladies and infirmities will never be fundamentally cured, but only painted over—by such a "culture of appetising form!"

FRIEDRICH NIETZSCHE, 1874

German Culture

I do not believe in the alleged desire for improvement of our people. The nation is bored.

PAUL ANTON DE LAGARDE, 1887



In respect of German culture I have always had the feeling that it was declining.

FRIEDRICH NIETZSCHE, 1887

Hitherto there has been no German culture. It is no refutation of this statement that there have been, in Germany, great solitary figures (for example Goethe); for these had their own culture. And close about them, as though around mighty, defiant, solitary crags, lay always the residual German character, like a soft, swampy, treacherous soil, on which every footstep of the foreigner made an "impression" and created "forms."

FRIEDRICH NIETZSCHE, 1887

There was as yet no German culture; there were solitary thinkers who were able, with astonishing dexterity, to remain in concealment in the midst of the greatest barbarism.

FRIEDRICH NIETZSCHE, 1882-1888

Hitherto there had been no culture in Germany, but always only mystical separatists. Always only individuals—that is a consolation!

FRIEDRICH NIETZSCHE, 1882-1888

As yet the Germans have no culture; the reason is, they have as yet no character.

FRIEDRICH NIETZSCHE, 1882-1888

The Germans whose history shows them as the procrastinators *par excellence*, are today the most backward civilized nation in Europe.

FRIEDRICH NIETZSCHE, 1888



We were poor for so long that we were bound to succumb to the temptation of rivalling our richer neighbours in luxury

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and good cheer. And now an age of luxury, of the over-estimation of material enjoyment, has suddenly come upon us, which must cause the most serious misgiving to those who had at heart the highest good of our people, its intellectual culture.

PRINCE BÜLOW, 1908



The Germans are sitting at the table of a culture whose chef is a braggart.

KARL KRAUS, 1909



The Germans—although they are among the peoples who have made, through individuals, the largest contribution to the civilization of the world—have hitherto been denied the formation of a national culture, which would harmonize their instincts and their intellect, benefiting them and winning the respect of other nations. It is generally recognized that the reason why we have not attained this harmony is to be found, not in a deficiency, but rather in a superfluity; and when people say that a great proportion of the German people are wrongly educated or over-educated, or are book-worms and pedagogues, what they mean is merely this: that Nature has often clouded the intellect instead of fertilizing it.

OSCAR A. H. SCHMITZ, 1914



Between 1870 and 1914 the German State was still too youthful to develop a German form of its own. This has damaged us in the eyes of the world.

ALFRED VON TIRPITZ, 1919



It is the fault of Arminius that wide Germanic, and perhaps also Slavic regions, did not share in the more desirable blessings of the Roman civilization. From those still barbaric and primeval forests, the Germans, all too early, burst through the Roman *limes* into the already civilized regions of Ger-

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many. Consequently the south-western regions of Germany enjoyed the blessing of Roman civilization for some two centuries only, while Britain remained Roman for four hundred years, and France for five hundred. By this England and France gained an enormous cultural start over Germany; which made even the "greatest" Germans, like Frederick the Great, Goethe, Winckelmann, Dürer, Holbein, and Nietzsche, the humble admirers of south-western superiority.

WERNER HEGEMANN, 1934



The spiritual dearth of the German post-war period was fundamentally a dearth of intellect; it was one of those epochs of intellectual helplessness, when everything that cannot exist without genuine intellect must finally go to the dogs, especially if it cannot draw the vital forces which it needs, if it is to survive this state of affairs, from the treasury of an intellectual tradition and a cultural inheritance.

EDGAR ALEXANDER, 1937

XX

Le Style c'est le Peuple

I have found that many German words are so indefinite that often the person who uses them is thinking quite otherwise than he should really think; and the person who hears them is easily misled, if not completely deceived.

GOTTLIEB WILHELM RABENER, 1752-1755



We Germans have for the most part a sort of mestizo style.

GEORG CHRISTOPH LICHTENBERG, 1775-1779



Let us now take a look at our fatherland. I hear a gibberish spoken which is quite without charm, and which everyone uses according to his humour. The expressions are applied without discrimination, the most apposite and characteristic words are neglected, and the real meaning is drowned in an ocean of accessory verbiage. FREDERICK THE GREAT, 1780

Let us begin with the German language. The reproach I bring against it is that it is wordy, inflexible and unmelodious, and is deficient in the wealth of figurative expressions which are so necessary in order to give a polite language new idioms and elegance. FREDERICK THE GREAT, 1780



Whether poverty has increased in Germany I do not know, but the signs of exclamation have certainly increased. Where one used to put merely! we now find!!!

GEORG CHRISTOPH LICHTENBERG, 1796

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That the German tongue was first used as a literary language by no great literary genius, but simply by average persons, ought to give the dilettante courage to experiment with it himself.

WOLFGANG GOETHE, 1799



Every German goes through a period when he wishes that other Germans would set more value on speech, for they, unlike children, have learned to write rather than talk; and when he craves for the debating clubs of London or the *bureaux d'esprit* of Paris, for these, he says, talk a language into life rather than talk it to death; and do not, as mussels do, reveal and surrender the best pearls by prolonged putrefaction.

JEAN PAUL FR. RICHTER, 1806

We Germans say everything slowly and at length and tediously.

JEAN PAUL FR. RICHTER, 1809



The man who would claim to be cultured must learn all manner of things; but the German does not wish to learn his language; that is to come to him of itself.

ERNST MORITZ ARNDT, 1813



It is so readily explained why the Germans can have no style that it is pardonable that they should have none. There is a national style and a personal style; the French have the former, the English the latter. But in Germany the men of art and science, although indeed they speak, in figurative language, of a republic of letters, actually live like savages, without any social bond; for which reason their intellectual oratories have a value, but no price—they have no style.

LUDWIG BÖRNE, 1820

The Germans are too timid: they dare not possess a style; they regard this as a sort of culpable counterfeiting. Their

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disquietude is betrayed by the fact that in didactic speech they say "We" instead of "I." LUDWIG BÖRNE, 1820



What are Englishmen and Frenchmen to think of the language
of our philosophers if we Germans ourselves do not understand it?
WOLFGANG GOETHE, 1824

WOLFGANG GOETHE, 1824

Philosophical speculation embarrasses the Germans, for it often imparts to their style a transcendental, incomprehensible, vague and involved character. The more completely they surrender themselves to certain schools of philosophy, the more badly do they write.

WOLFGANG GOETHE, 1824



What language can be compared with the German, what other is so rich and vigorous, so bold and so full of charm, so beautiful, so gentle as ours? It has a thousand hues and a thousand shades. It has a word for the smallest need of the moment, and a word for the unfathomable emotion that no eternity can exhaust. It is strong at need, versatile in danger, terrible in wrath, tender in compassion, and applicable to every undertaking. It is the true interpreter of all languages that are spoken by heaven and earth, air and water. . . . Yes, our language is a glorious one. But we are not allowed to make use of it!

LUDWIG BÖRNE, 1828



It is true that the real scholars among us create a language for themselves; they cannot at once find the way from the earlier jargon to honest German; and it is no wonder that Kant has been translated into German.

WILHELM HAUFF, 1830-1831

Le Style c'est le Peuple

I don't know how it is, but everything sounds so wooden in German. One simply cannot express any graceful thought in this Wendish tongue. Seriously, if I were a great ruler in Germany no one should be allowed to speak German, except the cab-drivers. The German tongue came into existence to be the language of cab-drivers.

CHRISTIAN FÜRCHTEGOTT GELLERT, 1839



It would, on the whole, be well for our German writers should it occur to them that one should, of course, when possible, think like a great intellect, but also that one should, on the other hand, speak like anyone else. One should use ordinary words and say extraordinary things; but they do precisely the opposite. We find them striving to wrap up trivial conceptions in noble words, and to clothe their very ordinary thoughts in the most unusual expressions, the most recherché, precious, and curious phrases. Their sentences always walk on stilts.

ARTHUR SCHOPENHAUER, 1851

The German does not stand on ceremony, but uses his language according to his humour, his short-sightedness, and his ignorance—as befits his intellectual and national physiognomy.

ARTHUR SCHOPENHAUER, 1851

The Germans are conspicuous above other nations for the negligence of their style, as of their dress.

ARTHUR SCHOPENHAUER, 1851

Scholars until about a hundred years ago, especially in Germany, wrote in Latin; in this language a grammatical slip would have been a disgrace; the majority took serious pains to write it with elegance, and many succeeded. Now, when they are released from this constraint, and enjoy the great convenience of being allowed to write in their own mother-tongue, one might expect that they would at least

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apply themselves earnestly to writing it with the greatest correctness and all possible elegance. In France, England and Italy this is the case. But in Germany it is quite the contrary! There they hastily scribble what they have to say, like hired lackeys, in any phrases that happen to occur to them, and indeed without grammar or logic.

ARTHUR SCHOPENHAUER, 1851

The true national character of the German is heaviness; it is manifest in their gait, their activities, their speech, their address, their manner of narration, their understanding and their thoughts; but quite peculiarly in their written style, in the pleasure they take in long, ponderous, involved sentences, in which memory alone, for five minutes on end, patiently cons the lesson imposed upon it, until at last, at the end of the sentence, comprehension comes in a flash and the riddle is solved.

ARTHUR SCHOPENHAUER, 1851

A fault of style which today, in the degenerate state of literature, and with the neglect of the languages of antiquity, is becoming even more frequent, though it is native only to Germany, is its *subjectivity*. It consists in this: that it suffices to the writer that he himself should know what he means and intends; the reader may follow him if he can.

ARTHUR SCHOPENHAUER, 1851

The mania for mangling the language, specifically German in its origin, is universal. Everybody sets to work at demolishing the language, without mercy or consideration; indeed, as when marksmen shoot at a popinjay, each tries to knock off a fragment where and as he can. So at a time when in Germany not a single author is living whose works can hope to endure, makers of books, men of letters, and writers for the newspapers have presumed to make an attempt to reform the language, and so we see this present generation, which for all its long beards is impotent, incapable of any intellectual

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output of superior quality, employing its leisure in mutilating, in the most wanton and shameless manner, the language in which great authors have written, in order to raise a Herostatic memorial to themselves.

ARTHUR SCHOPENHAUER, 1851

Filled with indignation over the shameful mutilation of the German tongue, which has been perpetrated methodically and *con amore*, year after year, by the hands of some thousands of bad writers and men without judgement, I find myself compelled to make the following declaration:

My curse upon everyone who, in future impressions of my works, knowingly alters anything therein, whether a sentence or only a word, a syllable, a letter, a punctuation.

ARTHUR SCHOPENHAUER, Summer 1860



In Germany . . . where bad writing is regarded as a national privilege.

FRIEDRICH NIETZSCHE, 1880

- A. German prose is still very young: Goethe considers that Wieland was its father.
- B. So young and already so ugly!
- C. But, to the best of my belief, Bishop Ulfila wrote German prose; so it is about five hundred years old.
- B. So old and yet so ugly!

FRIEDRICH NIETZSCHE, 1880

How little German style has to do with the sound and with the ears is shown by the fact that our good German musicians themselves write badly.

FRIEDRICH NIETZSCHE, 1885

What a martyrdom are books written in German for him who has the *third* ear! How reluctantly he lingers beside the slowly writhing slough of sounds without sonority, of rhythms that do not dance, which by Germans is known as “a book”!

FRIEDRICH NIETZSCHE, 1885

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The German is capable of leaving a truth unsaid for the sake of an hiatus, or at least of saying it in a less striking manner.

CHRISTIAN MORGENSTERN, 1910



It is strange how unfamiliar is the German language to those very persons who concern themselves with it out of patriotism.

FRANZ BLEI, 1924



Is not every German sentence a Wagnerian music-drama in miniature? At the end one finds redemption. But until then, at distressing length, there is nothing but heaviness, tedium and obscurity.

BRUNO FRANK, 1928

XXI

The Nation of Poets and Musicians

"Name me an animal so clever that I cannot imitate it!" the Ape boasted to the Fox. But the Fox replied: "And you, name me an animal so contemptible that it might even take it into its head to imitate you!" Authors of my nation, need I explain myself more clearly?

GOTTHOLD EPHRAIM LESSING, 1759



It is a prejudice peculiar to our century in Germany, that writing has tended to become the measure of merit. Perhaps a sound philosophy will gradually dispel this prejudice.

GEORG CHRISTOPH LICHTENBERG, 1742-1799

It seems as though among the Germans diligence made, and had to make, even the poet. It is, I think, as well to remind our countrymen, if they should wish to raise a claim to eminence, to choose vocations in which mere diligence and judgement determine the value of the work, and rather to avoid those in which a mustard-seed of genius may cast into the shade the forty years' labours of the assiduous imitator. One must leave flying to the birds.

GEORG CHRISTOPH LICHTENBERG, 1742-1799

In their love for their fatherland they write stuff which makes people laugh at our beloved fatherland.

GEORG CHRISTOPH LICHTENBERG, 1775-1779

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The German public compels its writers to be guided, not by the inner voice of genius, but by the speculations of the book trade.

FRIEDRICH SCHILLER, 1784



The Germans are, on the average, honest and decent people, but of the originality, invention, character, consistency, and execution of a work of art they have not the slightest conception. This means, in a word, that they have no taste.

WOLFGANG GOETHE, 1790

No one can serve two masters, and of all masters I should think the public that sits in the German theatres the least desirable.

WOLFGANG GOETHE, 1798



It is heartrending to see your poets, your artists, and all who still respect genius, who love and cherish beauty. Poor creatures, they live in the world like strangers in their own house. Full of love and intelligence and hope, these children of the Muses grow to manhood amidst the German people; but see them seven years later, and they wander like shadows, cold and silent.

FRIEDRICH HÖLDERLIN, 1799

It seems to me that if the works of our literature do not yet appear before the eyes of other nations with the lustre which the old writers—or at all events the French and English writers—have imposed upon them, this is not the fault of the language, but of the writers and the nation themselves; not because the former are incapable of expressing all the different aspects of the sublime and the beautiful, but because the latter is accustomed to content itself with an imperfect presentation of its own and alien ideas.

CHRISTIAN GARVE, 1792–1802



And so we write always for bookworms, making odes, heroic poems, hymns and popular songs such as no one under-

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stands, or wants, or feels. Our classic literature is a bird of paradise, so many-coloured and graceful is it, so high does it fly—and never sets foot on German soil.

JOHANN GOTTFRIED HERDER, 1744-1803



Fate, who allots all the contributions to our civilization, does not yet intend, I think, that art shall ripen in this northern clime.

HEINRICH VON KLEIST, 1803



Unlike the people of the South, the Germans are less ready speakers than writers, as their record offices and their book-cases declare.

JEAN PAUL FR. RICHTER, 1807



The Germans have a kind of Sabbath poetry, a poetry which clothes quite everyday figures in rather superior words, so that here again the clothes have to make the man.

WOLFGANG GOETHE, 1811

The German poets, since they no longer stood together as guild-brothers, did not enjoy the smallest advantage in the civic community. They had neither footing, nor rank, nor consideration, save in so far as circumstances favoured them, so it rested entirely upon chance whether a talent was born to honour or to disgrace.

WOLFGANG GOETHE, 1812-1814

The Italian writers are more difficult to judge than those of other nations. Their prose-writers become poets before one realizes it, because what with the poet is inborn they receive at second hand in their childhood; and with such easily acquired riches they can readily turn to creative work in accordance with their capacities. From this we can see why precisely the reverse is true of the Germans, and why in the

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long run our poetical natures commonly come to a dismal
and prosaic end.

WOLFGANG GOETHE, 1815



Nowhere and never have youth and age, in the matter of literary valuations, been more opposed than to-day in Germany, where the old man and the youth are familiar with quite different German masterpieces. In Paris and London, on the other hand, the temple of fame of their classics has remained the universal or simultaneous church of old and young.

JEAN PAUL FR. RICHTER, 1817



The German liking for vagueness in the arts comes from bungling and daubing; for the dauber cannot admit the value of true art, or he would count for nothing.

WOLFGANG GOETHE, 1821-1826



O would that at last some mighty genius might arise, armoured from head to foot with godlike strength, who would storm the German Parnassus and drive the rabble back into the mire from which it has crept!

CHRISTIAN DIETRICH GRABBE, 1822



Our literature is absolutely blind.

HEINRICH HEINE, 1824



All our dramatic writers, the bad, the good, and the best, are by nationality unnational, and their character is characterlessness. Our quiet, modest, shame-faced nature, our fireside virtue, our simulated wickedness in public life, our civic immaturity and our boastful style of writing—all these taken together are very great obstacles to the development of dramatic art.

LUDWIG BÖRNE, 1829

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Our worthy artists, with their affectation of “old German” qualities . . . turn with their personal feebleness and their artistic incapacity to the imitation of Nature, and think they have achieved something. They take their stand *below* Nature. But he who would create something great must have so increased his knowledge that he is able, like the Greeks, to lift the lesser, real Nature to the height of his intellect, and to make that real which in natural appearances, by reason of inherent weakness or external obstacles, has remained only intention.

WOLFGANG GOETHE, 1828

A German author—a German martyr.

WOLFGANG GOETHE, 1830



I was always astonished to note that our two greatest poets (Goethe and Schiller) are totally lacking in wit; but, I thought, they have the aristocratic pride of intellect, and in their public appearances are loth to show familiarity with wit, which is of plebeian birth. At home, when no one is observing them, they will surely be witty. But when I read their correspondence I found that in their dressing-gowns they had no more wit than when the sword was girt at their side.

LUDWIG BÖRNE, 1830



Schiller they necessarily do know, from going to the theatre, but he is generally above their heads: he is really too good for them. Of Goethe, Tieck, Jean Paul they know nothing. These have written for eternity, but not for our people.

WILHELM HAUFF, 1830-1831



The Austrian poets are like the Bremen cigars. The cigars made in Bremen are sent to America; there they receive the foreign brand, and wander home again, and all marvel at the

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delightful aroma which they now possess, while before this the devil himself would not have sampled them.

NIKOLAUS LENAU, 1833



If a German is not called Schiller or Goethe he goes through the whole world unrecognized.

FRANZ GRILLPARZER, 1836

This docility, against which “it pleases me” or “it does not please me” cannot make headway, is what I have called the cowardice of the German public. But a cowardly public necessarily engenders an impudent literature.

FRANZ GRILLPARZER, 1836

Voltaire’s *genre ennuieux* has its home in Germany.

FRANZ GRILLPARZER, 1836



It is really a pity that a composer should feel himself compelled also to write—but so it is with us Germans: we are one and all led on to the speculative *terrain*; but certainly not to our advantage.

RICHARD WAGNER, 1836



No nobleman has ever become a great poet in Germany, though a great poet has often become a nobleman.

FRIEDRICH HEBBEL, 1836

Since the time when it first established itself, German literature has passed through many phases. In its first period it was merely an opportunity for the scholars to repeat their lectures; but for the poets it was Golgotha and pillory. Later it became a prelude to fame, a chancellery where the diplomas of immortality were made out. Now it is a stock exchange. But here, of course, its various phases are described only in a

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negative manner. Yet it is from the maladies which it overcomes that one draws the truest conclusions as to the constitution of the body.

FRIEDRICH HEBBEL, 1839

The fate of German authors is really too cruel! As long as they are alive they can offer the bookseller their best, and unless they are willing to surrender character and manly dignity into the bargain, he dismisses them contemptuously; but as soon as they are dead he rummages through their remains, finding nothing too trivial, plunders their diaries and their correspondence, and makes them, even in the grave, the instrument of injustice against their fellows.

FRIEDRICH HEBBEL, 1839



Our literature is a phantom, and most species of poetry are phantasms; belief or disbelief in them we call aesthetics. Fresh, young blood is sucked dry, architectonic powers are misused, in order to animate and procreate unlicensed forms.

LUDOLF WIENBARG, 1839



There are verses in our new German literature which could not be excused even if one of the Ten Commandments had been: Thou shalt write verses.

FRIEDRICH HEBBEL, 1845

When one considers the German theatre with its hotchpotch of translations and imitations, one might well come to the conclusion that the Germans do not know how to amuse themselves.

FRIEDRICH HEBBEL, 1846



Our fatherland is a blessed land; here, it is true, no lemons or golden oranges grow, and even the laurel is a stunted growth on our German soil; but rotten apples increase

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among us in the most gratifying abundance, and all our great poets have contrived to sing a song about them.

HEINRICH HEINE, 1846



One is at once enraged and depressed by the cold, idle indifference with which, in Germany, the better classes regard the brutal ill-treatment which the scribbling mob inflicts almost daily upon our best authors and artists.

FRIEDRICH HEBBEL, 1848



All the comfortable excuses which refer to our still recent national prosperity are annihilated by the humiliating fact that in little Holland, in half-barbaric Russia, the editions of good books are often larger, often ten times larger than in our great and learned Germany. No people reads more or buys fewer books than ours. In particular, our upper classes, in their dealings with literature, show a lack of refinement and a parsimoniousness which our neighbours justly censure as unseemly.

HEINRICH VON TREITSCHKE, 1859



The accusation that one is a very bad writer is of course mitigated by the fact that in Germany it is very difficult to become a passable writer, while it is quite surprisingly improbable that one should ever become a good writer. We have not here the natural soil, the artistic evaluation and treatment and development of oral speech.

FRIEDRICH NIETZSCHE, 1873



There has been a sore lack in Germany of living works of art. It is as though Goethe and Schiller had been anything but artists; as though they had been philosophers, scholars

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and what not, and had now and again asked themselves: could not one write poetry even in Germany?

RICHARD WAGNER, 1880



The prohibitions of the censorship . . . will not surprise me, since they are only a logically conditioned concomitant phenomenon of the notorious indifference and stupidity which characterize the whole of our public life.

FRANK WEDEKIND, 1910



We Germans torment and deride our artists, and when they have died, embittered, we erect magnificent memorials to them. For which reason many German artists have of late preferred, if it was anyhow possible, to return to German soil only after their death, and to avoid, during their lifetime, as far as might be, the scorn of their countrymen and a fruitless personal struggle.

HERBERT EULENBERG, 1911

The depreciation of art in modern Germany has inflated the masses and increased their tastelessness to an almost unendurable degree. One may say without exaggeration that today we in Germany are almost completely terrorized by the bad taste of the mob.

HERBERT EULENBERG, 1911



It is no frivolous exaggeration, but a fact, that the muzzling of dramatic literature in Germany was never so fanatically practised as today.

FRANK WEDEKIND, 1912



The German writers have the talent of being unable to hold their tongues.

KARL KRAUS, 1913



No German author—not even a novelist—can ever represent the nation as Balzac, for example, has represented France:

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Dickens, England; and Tolstoy, Russia. The German epic poet has no firm foothold, he plays no part in the life of the people; and though he may compel one's attention, and touch one's heart, yet he is at the same time conscious of a curious public resistance, and an equally strange secret defensiveness, as though this form of art were hardly serious, hardly dignified.

JAKOB WASSERMANN, 1921



One might say that for the past hundred years the German author has been finding the way to his people through the educational funnel of the history of its literature.

FRANZ BLEI, 1924

The less money a man has the more he talks about it. No people talks so much about its literature, in so many histories of literature, as the German people. No literature is less historical—that is, poorer in tradition—than the German; everyone begins with Adam and with himself, and ends with himself. Nowhere are there so many books which try to convince the German that his literature has a history.

FRANZ BLEI, 1924

XXII

The Nation of Thinkers

Between ourselves, if I am not mistaken the time when Europe took its systems from the Germans as it obtains its spices from the Dutch is nearing its end, or is already past. One section of our countrymen is now so entangled in the critical revolt and the reviewing of *omnium contra omnes* that it does not hear, and the other, in its sensibility, has closed its eyes so tight that it does not see what is going on all around it.

GEORG CHRISTOPH LICHTENBERG, 1773

They seek out professors—hopeful young people!—they procure books, they read, make extracts, and argue themselves white and yellow, consumptive, frigid and impotent. And, after all, what use has it all been hitherto in Germany? Able advocates, and for that matter able judges, and respectable officials, that is true. But where are our edifying preachers, to whom he who knows the world and man can listen with any pleasure? Where are our publicists? And where (and at this, no doubt, the rogues shrug their shoulders), where, good God, are our philosophical historians? Men who can express briefly and vigorously the result of profound investigations, and who have humanity before their eyes, rather than the Upper or Lower Saxons?

GEORG CHRISTOPH LICHTENBERG, 1775



The Germans are condemned as of old to dwell in the Cimmerian nights of speculation.

WOLFGANG GOETHE, 1799

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The Germans repeat the philosophical Lord's Prayer as quickly as do witches the Lord's Prayer of the Gospel, *backwards*, in order to work magic with it.

JEAN PAUL FR. RICHTER, 1809



Of all nations, the Germans have philosophized the most, and this is because they have lived the least.

LUDWIG BÖRNE, 1811

The German, like Nature, has little regard for the arts; only the species of things are sacred to him. Procreation, not the thing procreated seems important to him. Perish the individual if only the family continues. As avaricious men gather treasures without using them, so the Germans accumulate principles, without applying them. LUDWIG BÖRNE, 1818

The German intellect dwells on the mountain heights, but the German soul gasps in the damp marshlands.

LUDWIG BÖRNE, 1821

The Germans prefer to propagate their dogmas by seed rather than by cuttings. LUDWIG BÖRNE, 1821



The Germans, after all, are a curious people! By their profound thoughts and ideas, which they seek everywhere and impart everywhere, they make life more difficult for themselves rather than easier. WOLFGANG GOETHE, 1827

The Germans—and not only the Germans—have the gift of making the sciences inaccessible.

WOLFGANG GOETHE, 1829



The German meditates over everything, sees everything in a bird's-eye perspective, and is therefore never quite familiar

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with anything. Thus, he is above a joke, yet he practises jesting, and is never humorous. He has discovered the point which Archimedes sought, and he ought to wish to lose it.

LUDWIG BÖRNE, 1829

The German is chaste, and requires marital fidelity of everyone else who is wedded to an idea.

LUDWIG BÖRNE, 1829–1834



O, this fatal erudition, this source of all Germany's troubles!

RICHARD WAGNER, 1834



We are a thinking nation, and because we had so many ideas that we could not write them all down we invented printing, and because, what with thinking and writing books, we often had no bread, we discovered the potato.

HEINRICH HEINE, 1839



There exists, among the great majority of German artists, a curious artistic patriotism, which nevertheless, in respect of its expressions, is based on a complete misunderstanding. It reveals the strangest contradictions. We see those very Germans who are so conspicuously ready to surrender to every foreign influence, and who, on receiving foreign guests, readily place themselves in the background, or quite forget themselves—we find them, on the other hand, using curiously German phrases, which they repeat until they themselves believe them, expressing themselves in the most violent rigorism against the tendencies of foreign art, and even denying its most characteristic merits. It is, of course, a very honourable if also mistaken pride that makes them call attention to the fact that the greatest heroes of the musical world were often Germans—and then they name Handel,

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Gluck, and Mozart; but strangely enough they are unwilling to remember that Handel, in England, exhaled the songs that he had inhaled in Italy, that Gluck, in Paris, won a triumph for French dramatic music, and finally, that Mozart must be regarded as the noblest exponent of the Italian school.

RICHARD WAGNER, 1840



If one sees—as, for example, now in Germany—a conspicuous liveliness, a general activity in the sense of writing and speaking of philosophical subjects, one may discreetly presume that the actual *primum mobile*, the concealed main-spring of such a movement, despite all solemn countenances and assurances, consists merely of real, not ideal aims; in other words that the interests kept in sight are personal, official, ecclesiastical, political—in short, material interests; and that they are therefore merely party purposes that set the many springs of the so-called philosophers in such violent motion; consequently intentions, not intuitions, are the lodestars of these unruly people, whereas truth is assuredly the last thing of which they are thinking.

ARTHUR SCHOPENHAUER, 1844

Such, to wit, is the position of German philosophy: covered with contempt, derided by the foreigner, rejected by the rational sciences; like a harlot who, for a sorry price, surrenders herself yesterday to that man and today to this.

ARTHUR SCHOPENHAUER, 1847



In the course of this debate we have been told that Europe regards us as a nation of thinkers. That, gentlemen, was in the past!

OTTO VON BISMARCK, 1849



Why does he drivel and drivel for ever? Well, I can tell you: If he can't understand himself he believes that a genius is speaking.

FRIEDRICH HEBBEL, 1857-1863

The Nation of Thinkers

The German public has an elective affinity for the inane: for which reason it has diligently read Messrs. Fries, Hegel, Krug, Herbart, Salat, etc., but has left me untouched.

ARTHUR SCHOPENHAUER, 1864



In certain respects we Germans have such an idolatrous reverence for the power of ideas that we ignore as far as possible the moral and physical powers by which alone they can be realized.

HERMANN BAUMGARTEN, 1870



Considered narrowly, the motive that urges the German to acquire unlimited knowledge is a lack, a deficit, a deficiency rather than a superplus of energy: almost like the consequence of a niggardly, formless, devitalized life.

FRIEDRICH NIETZSCHE, 1872



In its mystified form the (Hegelian) dialectic became a German fashion, because it seemed to explain the existing world.

KARL MARX, 1873



Schopenhauer was a fortunate accident among the Germans, and I am such another—the Germans have no fingers for us, but only claws.

FRIEDRICH NIETZSCHE, 1888

The Germans have inscribed themselves with equivocal names in the history of knowledge: they have always produced only “unconscious” forgers.

FRIEDRICH NIETZSCHE, 1888

The Germans—they were once called the nation of thinkers: do they still think at all today? The Germans are now bored by intellect: politics have swallowed up all serious interest for

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really intellectual things: "Deutschland, Deutschland über alles" was, I fear, the end of philosophy.

FRIEDRICH NIETZSCHE, 1888



Neither thought without knowledge as of old, nor knowledge without thought as now, is befitting the Germans.

JULIUS LANGBEHN, 1890



The Germans call themselves the people of Schopenhauer, while Schopenhauer was so modest that he did not regard himself as the thinker of the Germans.

KARL KRAUS, 1915



Homage was always paid to German liberty. The representatives of German intellect come forward in a single brilliant chain: Goethe, Schiller, Kant, Fichte, Bismarck. They were free German men. The beauty of the man is character; the civilizing dynamic is the categorical imperative. Could one assume that younger strata would come and take all this in deadly earnest? In whose name would you defend yourself against them? Could you seriously object to the fact that the categorical imperative has now drawn on jack-boots? Were only thoughts intended for marching, and not rather legs?

FRIEDRICH MUCKERMANN, S.J., 1933

XXIII

German Scholars

What is there to marvel at if the country is everywhere so full of magicians? Let us rather marvel at the German madness, and the great ignorance of those who bear the name of scholars.

FRIEDRICH VON SPEE, 1631



Our great intellects are rarely scholars, and our scholars are rarely great intellects. GOTTHOLD EPHRAIM LESSING, 1759



I hear that a German professor at Halle has written of the art of the ancients: a plague wherewith the German scribblers are beginning to be infected: If only these inexperienced bunglers would stick to logic and metaphysics, or find something else to do!

JOHANN JOACHIM WINCKELMANN, 1767



It is astonishing how many scholars in Germany accumulate knowledge merely in order to show it off.

GEORG CHRISTOPH LICHTENBERG, 1742-1799

Many of our very mediocre scholars might have been greater men if they had not read so much.

GEORG CHRISTOPH LICHTENBERG, 1742-1799

In Germany we have a host of scholars who can promptly throw themselves, as we say, into a special subject. These people secretly marvel at themselves, for being able so

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quickly to write on a grim subject. They become polygraphs before they realize it, and achieve a reputation: but as a rule they are admired only by the ignorant and inexperienced. The true specialist smiles at their works, from which his science does not derive a pennorth of profit. They, on the other hand, are foolish enough to believe that the experts refuse to applaud them out of envy. One may be so bold as to assert that most of our writers are of this kidney. They are excellent writers to talk about—for to be eminent even among such as these is an honour, at least in the country where it is the fashion to be taught in this manner—but they assuredly do not profit from science. In order to write on a science in such a way that one does not merely amaze the crowd, but wins the applause of the experts, and even makes a contribution to science, one must devote oneself to it singly, and sometimes even elaborate only small individual portions of it. Our scholars will of course be superseded by others like them; they die in their thousands in the evening of the day when they glittered and sported in the sunlight, and are forgotten.

GEORG CHRISTOPH LICHTENBERG, 1742–1799

Our scholars fall into the error of the grocers in the little towns; they do not buy things where they grow, but prefer to be told of them first by an Englishman or a Frenchman.

GEORG CHRISTOPH LICHTENBERG, 1772–1775

What then is a German scholar? Nothing; a sallow, emaciated casing for a soul, whose waistcoat has more wrinkles than the cloaks of other people. Lay figures, which one can draw, and pull about as one likes. What may be said of many of them after five or six hundred years does not concern us now.

GEORG CHRISTOPH LICHTENBERG, 1775



(Of German philosophers.) These gentlemen are all con-

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stantly chewing the cud of their own follies, ruminating their ego. This may be agreeable to them, but not to others.

WOLFGANG GOETHE, 1799



But our scholars—do they, with all their preliminary labours, ever attain their goal? They are constantly whetting their swords, though they never use them; they learn and learn, and never have time to do the thing that counts.

HEINRICH VON KLEIST, 1801



. . . the (German) professors and their treatises, overflowing with notes and quotations, in which they make excursions to right and left, so that the main point is forgotten, are like led dogs which, when they have barely tugged at the leash a few times, once more lift their legs against all sorts of questionable objects, so that one cannot stir from the spot with the beasts, but it takes all day to cover a few miles.

WOLFGANG GOETHE, 1806



I could wish I had a nobler simile, in order to appraise the German aptness for genuine science and liberty, than the observation of Bechstein, that obstinacy and indocility are always the best signs of an excellent pointer.

JEAN PAUL FR. RICHTER, 1808



Science should be serious, and life also; but not solemn. But it is too solemn in our fatherland, and it would be good if it were to smile a little. The beard does not make the scholar venerable; it only makes him ridiculous, and a great deal of his value is consumed in paying ransom for his ridiculous appearance.

LUDWIG BÖRNE, 1826

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The German scholar regards himself as a State functionary. For him, his books are documents, his study is an office, his science a mystery. He has taken an oath to leave his understanding at home whenever he goes out—that is, whenever he writes for the crowd. If for once in a way necessity or his humour impels him to write for people with understanding, he does it just like the officials whom he resembles. These, in the exercise of power, have forgotten the use of speech, and if a time should come when threats have no effect, when only conviction could be efficacious, they stand helpless, simper when they make requests, are ungraceful when they flatter, and ridiculous if they try to be affecting.

LUDWIG BÖRNE, 1826



Hardly a day passes but I am visited by passing strangers. But if I were to say that I take delight in the personal appearance of these visitors—and in particular, in that of the young German scholars from a certain north-westerly direction—I should be telling a lie; shortsighted, pale, with sunken breast, young without youth; that is the portrait of the majority, as they appear before me. And when I get into conversation with them I at once realize that the things which delights us appear trivial and meaningless to them, that they are wholly absorbed in ideas, and only the loftiest problems of speculation are of a nature to interest them. Of healthy senses and delight in the sensual there is not a trace in these people; all youth and youthful feeling have been driven out of them, never to be recalled; for if a man is not young in his twentieth year, how should he be so in his fortieth?

WOLFGANG GOETHE, 1828

A third of the scholars and State officials who are chained to the desk are physically decrepit and victims of the demon of hypochondria. Here it would be necessary to intervene from above, in order, at all events, to save further generations

German Scholars

from a similar disaster. In the meantime we will hope, and wait, and see what we Germans look like a hundred years hence, and whether we shall then have progressed so far as to be no longer abstracted scholars and philosophers, but human beings.

WOLFGANG GOETHE, 1828

In Germany argument is unthinkable; everyone has the opinions of his province, his city, even of his own individual self, and we shall have long to wait before we come to any sort of universal education.

WOLFGANG GOETHE, 1828



German scholarship is even under favourable conditions only a glittering poverty, rich in hopes, but yet richer in privations and needs of every kind. I rose to the greatest height which a German scholar can attain, I was *professor ordinarius*, and I fell back again, and only the happier for my fall, after I had lost my post and my salary.

HOFFMANN VON FALLERSLEBEN, 1846



It is, I believe, no lack of talent which prevents the majority of German scholars from addressing the public on the subject of religion and philosophy. I believe it is dread of the results of their own thinking, which they dare not communicate to the people.

HEINRICH HEINE, 1852



The German scholars, who have hitherto, to all appearances, been the most German of the Germans, were and perhaps are still as good as the German soldiers, by virtue of their profound, almost childlike aptitude for obedience in all external matters, and the necessity, in the domain of science, of taking a lonely stand and assuming great responsibility.

FRIEDRICH NIETZSCHE, 1881

German versus Hun

We are beginning to brag scientifically, and to allow our national egoism and our party passions to affect our scientific research.

HERMANN BAUMGARTEN, 1883

When it is a question of interpreting a Greek inscription or dating a mediaeval document, then German scholars consider that it is incumbent upon them to exercise the most painstaking care; but when it comes to describing their modern developments they think themselves at liberty to turn their backs upon their critics.

HERMANN BAUMGARTEN, 1883



The ponderousness of the German scholar, his social insipidity, harmonize astonishingly well with an introspective rope-dancing and an easy audacity which all the gods have already learned to fear.

FRIEDRICH NIETZSCHE, 1885



The Professor is the German national malady. The modern education of German youth is a sort of Bedlamite child-murder.

JULIUS LANGBEHN, 1890

German science is lacking in art, and German art—in mathematics.

JULIUS LANGBEHN, 1890

XXIV

National Qualities

France is the land of fashions,
England the land of humours
Spain the land of ancestors,
Italy the land of magnificence
Germany the land of—titles.

IMMANUEL KANT, 1724-1809



Herr Kant used to say when he spoke of the deserts of the nations in respect of the sciences, that the German provided the root and the stem, the Frenchman the flower, the Englishman the fruits, and the Italian the foliage.

GEORG CHRISTOPH LICHTENBERG, 1796-1799



Italian and German

Are poles that are parted for ever;
The one is always a child
The other a child was never.

WILHELM WAIBLINGER, 1827

What is the difference that lies between Roman and German?
The one does nothing, and lives; the other—he lives not, and labours.

WILHELM WAIBLINGER, 1827



As for the Germans, they have need neither of liberty nor of equality. They are a speculative nation, ideologists, who

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anticipate and ruminate; dreamers, who live only in the past and the future, and have no present. Englishmen and Frenchmen have a present; with them every day has its offensive and defensive, and its history. The German has nothing to fight for, and when he began to suspect that there might after all be things which it would be desirable to possess, his philosophers prudently taught him to doubt the existence of those things. It cannot be denied that even the German loves liberty. But not as other nations. The Englishman loves liberty as his lawful wife; he possesses her, and even if he does not treat her with particular tenderness, he knows how to defend her, at need, like a man, and woe to the red-coated fellow who forces his way into the sacred bedchamber, whether as gallant or constable. The Frenchman loves liberty as his chosen bride. He is on fire for her, he burns, he casts himself at her feet with the most extravagant protestations, he fights to the death for her, he commits a thousand follies for her sake. The German loves liberty as he loves his old grandmother.

HEINRICH HEINE, 1828



French and English . . . hit it off far better and follow each other's example. There is a certain agreement in their dress and their behaviour. They are afraid of being too different one from the other, lest they should make themselves conspicuous or even ridiculous. As for the Germans, each follows his own nose, each seeks to satisfy himself; he does not ask what others are doing; for in every German, as Guizot rightly discovered, there lives the ideal of personal liberty, from which, as we have said, much that is excellent proceeds, but also much that is absurd.

WOLFGANG GOETHE, 1829



The Roman has little or no respect for us; *Tedesco!* he says, and compassionately shrugs his shoulders, and perhaps adds

National Qualities

a contemptuous *poveretto!* In this country anyone who goes shabbily dressed is called a German. But if you are an Englishman! At the very sound of this name *camerieri* come rushing up, with *facchini*, *ciceroni* and *ruffiani*!

WILHELM WAIBLINGER, 1829



Italians are imagination, Frenchmen are wit, Englishmen are understanding, Germans are remembrance.

KARL JULIUS WEBER, 1832-1840



If an Italian should compliment a German on an artistic achievement, the latter should never thank him. The Italian, even if the compliment is honestly intended, is only expressing his amazement at finding that a bear can dance; but never his admiration of the dance itself.

FRIEDRICH HEBBEL, 1846

When one returns to Germany from Italy one feels as though one had suddenly grown old. FRIEDRICH HEBBEL, 1853



A poor Venetian gondolier nevertheless cuts a better figure than a Berlin Geheimrat, and is even a better man: the fact is palpable. Ask the women what they think.

FRIEDRICH NIETZSCHE, 1882-1888



Silent men there may be elsewhere, hosts of them, in England or Scandinavia for example, but in bad speakers we are certainly richer than all other nations.

HERBERT EULENBERG, 1912



The corrupt German is still worse than the corrupt Italian or Frenchman.

ALFRED VON TIRPITZ, 1919

German versus Hun

Why are the French and Italians, the English and Americans, and really all other peoples, better speakers than we? In the first place, this may have something to do with the German's defective sense of form. While in the French schools a special value attaches to "rhetoric," and almost all the great French Parliamentarians have already distinguished themselves, as schoolboys, in this essential subject of instruction, and while most of the English Ministers and Members of Parliament were known as effective debaters at Eton or Harrow, Oxford or Cambridge, in Germany the art of speech is almost entirely neglected.

PRINCE BÜLOW, 1921-1926



In Italy, in France, in England, there is a completed revolution between thought and action; the men of intellect are within reach of the people, and the people are capable of approaching them . . . while with the Germans comprehensive and exalted conceptions are carried away by the mind, or wither and harden in corners, and public affairs are executed only with interminable delay, as the most lamentable necessity dictates.

ERICH KAHLER, 1937

Germans and Englishmen

In England one finds more original characters in society and among the common people than one realizes from their writings. We, on the other hand, have few in writing, and none at all under the gallows.

GEORG CHRISTOPH LICHTENBERG, 1742-1799

The Germans may say what they will, but it cannot be denied that our learning consists rather in knowing exactly what appertains to a science, and at the same time being able to state plainly what this or the other has done in this science, rather than attempting to make any contributions to it. Even among our greatest writers there are some who really do no more than print what one already knew, arranged in orderly fashion, with here and there an elucidation, which they have either taken from elsewhere, or which for other reasons presents no difficulty. How many Kants, Eulers, Klaproths have we? The English do not concern themselves overmuch with what others may have known, and always endeavour to go further than the general knowledge extends, and here they do very well—and so do we—that is, by adopting the discoveries of the English.

GEORG CHRISTOPH LICHTENBERG, 1742-1799

From Eton and Westminster come men who, under any circumstances, would rather do anything but talk. When I want to give myself a treat I imagine one of our fifteen-year-old learned boys in the society of an English boy of the same age, just back from Eton. The first, his hair in a bag and

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powdered, humble and attentive, discharges a mass of learning at the slightest touch, in all his opinions merely a bad copy of Papa or his schoolmaster; a mere reflection, the object of admiration until his sixteenth year, and regarded with silent expectation in his seventeenth, eighteenth, nineteenth, twentieth years, though in the meantime the edifice built upon hollow ground is beginning to sink. In his twenty-second or twenty-third year a mediocre intelligence, and so to the end. As for the English boy, his clean, curly hair hanging about his ears and forehead, his complexion blooming, his hands scratched, a wound on every knuckle, Homer, Horace and Virgil are always at call; in his opinions he is decided and individual; he makes a thousand blunders, but he corrects them himself. . . .

GEORG CHRISTOPH LICHTENBERG 1776-1779

I believe, after all, that in comparison with the English, reason, among the Germans, is more active in suppressing what ought not really to occur at all. For example, on many occasions the German does not laugh because he knows that laughter would be incongruous: whereas it simply would not occur to the Englishman to laugh.

GEORG CHRISTOPH LICHTENBERG, 1798-1799



Why are there nowhere faster stage-coaches and postilions than in England? Simply because there anyone can be a postilion, and in order to attain to this dignity he is lifted above his fellows only by his horse. Compare this with the German guilds and the right of seniority!

JEAN PAUL FR. RICHTER, 1809



The (English) people is nowadays much politer and better educated; the hatred of foreigners has abated, yet they have

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a supreme contempt for the Germans . . . but not for the Austrians, to whose efforts they do justice.

COUNT NEITHARDT VON GNEISENAU, 1811

What then (in England) is regarded as necessary by the beggar would be gluttony to our State officials: meat such as we never taste, strong beer, excellent cheese, and dazzlingly white bread.

COUNT NEITHARDT VON GNEISENAU, 1811



Scott's magic is founded on the splendour of the three British kingdoms and the inexhaustible variety of their history, while in Germany, from the Thuringian forest to the sandy wastes of Mecklenburg, there is nowhere a fruitful field for the writer of romances.

WOLFGANG GOETHE, 1823

The English will shame us by sheer human understanding and good will, the French by intelligent circumspection and practical execution.

WOLFGANG GOETHE, 1825

The Englishman has a masterly way of immediately making use of discoveries until they lead to further discoveries and fresh activities. And people ask why they are everywhere ahead of us.

WOLFGANG GOETHE, 1827-1830

“As a German householder, who has the peace of his family at heart, I often feel a little dismay when my daughter-in-law informs me that the arrival of another young islander is expected shortly. In my mind’s eye I can already see the tears which will one day flow on his departure. They are dangerous young men; but after all, that they are dangerous is precisely their virtue.”

“Yet I should not care to assert,” I (Eckermann) interposed, “that our Weimarish young Englishmen are cleverer,

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more intellectual, better educated, and more good-hearted than other folk."

"These, my dear fellow," Goethe replied, "are not the things that matter. Nor do birth and wealth matter. It is simply that they have the courage to be what Nature made them. There is nothing about them that is strained or distorted: nothing half-hearted or perverse; but just as they are, they are complete human beings. There are complete fools among them too, I grant you with all my heart; but even that is something, and has still a certain weight in the scales of Nature."

WOLFGANG GOETHE, 12 March, 1828

The blessing of personal liberty, the consciousness of the English name, and the significance that attaches to it for other nations, benefits even the children, so that both in the family and in their educational institutions they are treated with far greater regard, and enjoy a much happier and fuller development than among us Germans.

WOLFGANG GOETHE, 1828

If we could only give the Germans, after the example of the English, less philosophy and more energy, less theory and more practice, a goodly portion of salvation would already be vouchsafed to us, without the need to wait for the appearance of the personal sublimity of a second Christ.

WOLFGANG GOETHE, 1828

But while the Germans plague themselves with the solution of philosophical problems, the English, with their great practical intelligence, laugh at us and conquer the world.

WOLFGANG GOETHE, 1829



When the German orders a bottle of champagne and six glasses, the Briton orders six bottles and a glass.

KARL JULIUS WEBER, 1832-1840

Germans and Englishmen

Here let it again be remarked, that equity is the enemy of justice and often assaults it outrageously; so one should not allow it too much scope. The German is a lover of equity, the Englishman holds with justice.

ARTHUR SCHOPENHAUER, 1840

The English show their great intelligence in this also, that they hold fast to their ancient institutions, manners and usages, and regard them as sacred; at the risk of carrying this tenacity too far, even to the point of absurdity: for after all, these things were not hatched by an idle brain, but have gradually grown out of the power of circumstances and the wisdom of life itself; so that they are adapted to them as a nation. On the other hand, the German Michel has been persuaded by his schoolmaster that he must go about in an English tail-coat; nothing else will do; so he has wheedled one out of Papa, and now looks ridiculous enough in it, with his uncouth manners and his stiff deportment.

ARTHUR SCHOPENHAUER, 1851

An Englishman consults his own judgement as to what he writes or what he does; the German, on the contrary, is the last person of whom this can be said.

ARTHUR SCHOPENHAUER, 1851



I, who in Germany was persecuted by the police as though I had been a pickpocket, and who was plagued with passport difficulties in France, was received by the Queen of England, before the most aristocratic court in the world, with the most formal affability; it was really quite delightful!

RICHARD WAGNER, 1855



As far as foreign countries are concerned, all my life I have felt sympathy only for England and its inhabitants, and there are times when I still feel it.

OTTO VON BISMARCK, 1857

German versus Hun

To burn with an idea, to be consumed by it: that is French. The German admires himself, stands before the mirror with his passion, and calls others to look.

FRIEDRICH NIETZSCHE, 1876-1879



Germany can be likened to a self-made man, England to an old, aristocratic peer.

OTTO VON BISMARCK, 1890



Not for the first time in my acquaintance with England I note that when Germany shows an inclination to draw closer to England she obtains no response from England, and vice versa. The instruments on either side are not attuned at the same time, and harmony on the one side is answered by dissonance on the other. England and Germany have not the same sounding-boards.

COUNT PAUL METTERNICH, 1905



To embitter the feeling of the German people against England, always and everywhere to incite them against England, to blow upon petty grievances so that if possible a blaze shall result, is not only criminal, but also *stupid*.

PRINCE BÜLOW, 1906



English people are too conceited; Germans too touchy.

DAISY PRINCESS OF PLESS, 1909



It has at all times been a mistake of our militaristic Prussian thinkers to underestimate the Western Powers, and especially the English.

PRINCE BÜLOW, 1909



The English despise the German because he acts in contravention of their commercial ethics, what with "servile"

Germans and Englishmen

adaptations of his wares, in disregard of their national and individual form, to meet the requirements of his customers, and of mass production, in any market, to say nothing of his undercutting, the style of his advertisements, and the tendency, not always justified by demand and the chances of profit, to expand his business and to sell at ruinous prices. The truth is not that they were economically defeated, but that they were defeated—in their opinion—by qualities which, in accordance with their ethics, they feel that they ought to despise; and this aroused their “hatred.”

MAX SCHELER, 1917



Even now, in the midst of war, anyone in the vast circle of the Albert Hall is free to damn the Minister, Lloyd George: anyone can write and print his opinion that Germany's cause rests upon a firmer basis of justice than England's. The most drastic criticism is still allowed. Such tolerance testifies to a more virile consciousness of power than the compulsion which, in a time of the most solemn decisions, leaves one only the alternatives of silence, or of bleating the tune struck up by the government.

MAXIMILIAN HARDEN, January, 1918



In England they had more understanding for the fact that views alter, while the doctrinaire German immediately declared: There he has reckoned falsely, *anathema sit*. If one proposes a system to the German, he readily believes in it.

ALFRED VON TIRPITZ, 1919

The German, who in good faith believes it to be his right to expand peacefully throughout the world, and, of course, wherever he goes to outflank the English influence, has in general an insufficient understanding of the feelings of the older possessor, in whose eyes we are the intruder.

ALFRED VON TIRPITZ, 1919

German versus Hun

Personally, I regard England with a mixture of admiration and envy; admiration for the energy and the virtues of the English people, for its piety in respect of the historical past, this most certain criterion of great and powerful peoples, for its inflexible national pride, its unshakable national feeling, and its almost infallible political instinct, which is denied to the German people. PRINCE BÜLOW, 1921-1926

The old fault of the Germans, who judge the great problems of foreign policy, events whose theatre is the world, and the nations of the world, from the narrow standpoint of German party politics, made itself felt in their attitude to England. . . . The German conservatives looked with derision upon the “nation of shopkeepers”; had not Wellington, surprised by a downpour of rain when reviewing troops, opened a quickly-produced umbrella, and did not the sons of dukes become bank clerks? In the midst of the world war, when the English had already given many proofs of strong national feeling, and also of incontestable personal courage, a well-known German scholar, Professor Werner Sombart, wrote a war book which he entitled *Helden und Händler* (“Heroes and Tradesmen”), which was not only in grossly bad taste, but was also quite unjust. PRINCE BÜLOW, 1921-1926

In contrast to the theoretical-minded German, who likes to derive his opinions from books, or from the depth of his ethical convictions, the Englishman bases his judgement on immediate observation. PRINCE BÜLOW, 1921-1926

The Englishman—not altogether without reason—finds the German “too noisy,” especially at table. I recollect a breakfast at Friedrichshof, not long before the death of the poor Empress Frederick. The Emperor Wilhelm, as was his custom, was speaking very vivaciously, but not really very badly, when his mother said to him, with a pained expression: “Please do not speak so loud!” And with a sigh she

Germans and Englishmen

added: "Germans have too often the bad habit of speaking very loud." PRINCE BÜLOW, 1921-1926

The under-valuation of appearances, and of externalities in general, to which the "serious" and "realistic" German is prone, and which, though praiseworthy in itself, yet often degenerates into unmannerness, has contributed not a little to the estrangement between the Germans and the English. Not long before the outbreak of the war a very influential Englishman said: "A big German fleet and the bad German manners are more than we can stand."

PRINCE BÜLOW, 1921-1926

From the English nursery, which is the best in the world, to the grown Englishman, hardened by constant bodily exercise, which is continued even by those of quite advanced years, I found all the English healthy. Men with such well-nourished, powerful bodies and such strong national feelings are bound to be capable of great achievements. The English are truly a lordly people, for whom, in contrast to the Germans, in whom only too often "the native hue of resolution is sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought," the will to power is a political motive and aim.

PRINCE BÜLOW, 1921-26

The Englishman has not as much learning as the majority of Germans, but for that very reason his mind is more restful. The young German, when he leaves a German school, certainly knows more than the English schoolboy. But the English school does more for the formation of character, for the education of the future citizen, since the thing most necessary, in view of the "struggle for life" among the nations, is to give the country capable, virile, and thoroughly national-minded and patriotic citizens.

PRINCE BÜLOW, 1921-1926

German versus Hun

This nation of “idealists” is doomed to misrepresent itself, unlike the related Anglo-Saxons, the realists *par excellence*, who, with their sense of reality, and consequently with the truth, have progressed much farther in the course of the centuries.

ARTHUR LANDSBERGER, 1925



The German people were still living under the mild yet rigid patriarchalism of a dozen dynasties when the English had been governed for centuries under the Magna Carta, and educated to determine its own destiny. Those who forget this difference, with all its moral and political consequences, cannot form a just opinion of Germany’s evolution of yesterday and today.

MAXIMILIAN HARDEN, 1927



The Englishman hits out, and considers afterwards how he can place the most favourable construction on the blow: the German considers how he can best strike—and often loses the opportunity of striking the best blow.

EWALD BANSE, 1932

The German underestimated most of his adversaries; above all, he had no conception of the tenacity and the organizing power of the Anglo-Saxons on either side of the Atlantic.

EWALD BANSE, 1932



The Germans are great at suspecting, criticizing, and frustrating creative activities. They have not the historic experience, the strength of tradition that are native to England. The nation of poets and thinkers is on the way to becoming a nation of slanderers and persecutors!

OSWALD SPENGLER, 1933

XXVI

German and French

We are just emerging from barbarism, and the arts are still in their swaddling-clothes, but the French have already covered some distance, and are a century ahead of us, above all in every matter of consequence.

FREDERICK THE GREAT, 1746

Most of the German scholars were artisans, the French were artists.

FREDERICK THE GREAT, 1775



A German physician (Herr Grimm), in his traveller's reminiscences, sneers at the French omniscience, as he calls it; but this quality is not by a long way so inelegant as when it occurs in a German, who commonly erects it into a ponderous system, from which it is subsequently difficult to move him, whereas in France a thing like mesmerism is a fashion for a while, and soon afterwards has completely disappeared.

IMMANUEL KANT, 1790



Strive for the Grecian beauty, the Roman power!
Both have been yours: but never the Gallic verve!

FRIEDRICH SCHILLER, 1796



That which is done with in France, by the German is still enacted:

Here the proudest of men flatters the mob and crawls.

WOLFGANG GOETHE, 1796

German versus Hun

The German speaks with understanding, the Frenchman with wit. The speech of the first is like a business journey; the speech of the latter is like a pleasant saunter. The German wanders round the subject; the Frenchman catches the ray of light which it casts upon him, and passes on.

HEINRICH VON KLEIST, 1801



When Mendelssohn defined pain as a breach of continuity, he was at all events defining the German's pain correctly. We are unwilling to move out of an old position, and I will wager that the Germans turn over in their beds far seldom than the French.

JEAN PAUL FR. RICHTER, 1809



The French have a monstrous respect for a German scholar; greater than for any encyclopaedia in a hundred folio volumes, for they rate him at two hundred volumes. But when it comes to applying his knowledge to speaking, writing, artistic representation, or conversation, they laugh at him, and if they do not tell him that he is a sheep, they refrain merely out of politeness; but they certainly think it. Now the German scholar is angered, and wants to show that he has something in him. But what can he gain in a friendly duel with the French? The wit of the Frenchman is a rapier that has a point, but no edge; the wit of the German is a sword that has an edge but no point; and the stabbing always conquered the hacking weapon.

LUDWIG BÖRNE, 1822-1823

The German language pays in copper or gold. The one is a load to carry, and becomes burdensome: the other is useless for the petty needs of conversation. But the French can manage anywhere with their silver speech. In any difference of opinion, which is often the best spice of social conversation, the German must either spare his opponent, and then nothing is decided, or he must wound him. But the French-

German and French

man has a leathern pad on every pointed word: he wears his sword in the scabbard, and has no need to tame his wit lest he hurt his opponent.

LUDWIG BÖRNE, 1822-1823

The German smokes, for he has a full heart and idle hours; the Frenchman, whose heart is not full, has no idle hours; so he does not smoke. The German smokes, for he loves to dream, thinking without thought; but the Frenchman thinks only thoughts, and asks his wandering mind, like a passport official: Whither? To what place? For how long? In what company?

LUDWIG BÖRNE, 1822-1823

The German learns much and forgets much; the Frenchman learns less and forgets nothing. Day after day his social life stimulates his drowsy thirst for knowledge; and he learns because it is pleasant to learn. But the life which the German leads in his study is like a fruit preserved in sugar or vinegar.

LUDWIG BÖRNE, 1823

In Germany the paths that lead from science to life are few in number, and impassable. The scientific wealth of the French is perhaps a hundred times smaller than that of the Germans, but it is just as effective; for while in France the capital is turned over a hundred times, in Germany it is turned over only once. The Frenchman, indeed, knows no more than what he says and writes; but he says and writes all that he knows, and repeats it every day. In Germany we starve out of sheer superfluity.

LUDWIG BÖRNE, 1823

Nature intended the Germans to think, and not to write, and if she were true to her intention she would issue her ideas in the raw state and have them elaborated by the French and English. While in France the most beggarly ideas are always cleanly and handsomely dressed, so that they have the entrée into good society, in Germany the richest scholars wrap

German versus Hun

themselves in rags, find all the doors closed against them, and are bayed by every insolent watchdog.

The German cannot make a book. A good book, a book which is what a book should be, must be able to dispense with a title-page. Now, take every German volume and see whether one can guess its content and its purpose without the title-page. There are building materials, often of the best; blocks of marble, marble columns, mahogany, carpets, crystal mirrors, fine paintings—but no completed house. And even if a house is built, though it may be habitable and comfortable inside, yet the outside has been neglected, and no passer-by would be tempted to enter, and look over the house, and buy it. Eminent Berlin scholars rest on silken cushions behind walls of clay; while the Parisian rascallion trips along to his straw bed through lofty marble portals.

LUDWIG BÖRNE, 1826

To the French a book is almost an event; a political article is a political action; to the German every event is a book, and a political transaction is a political treatise.

LUDWIG BÖRNE, 1828



When the Frenchman goes into society he puts aside in the vestibule, not only his cloak and his hat, but he also leaves his minister, his financier, his *savant*, his man of letters, his deputy, etc., hanging on the peg, and enters society as a mere good companion. With us, however, there is no society; everyone brings with him his office and his title, and hangs them, like a napkin, before his mouth, lest anything merely human should escape him.

K. F. M. SAPHIR, 1830



Englishmen, Dutchmen, Spaniards, Portuguese, Italians, Poles, Greeks, Americans and even negroes have fought for

German and French

the liberty of the French, which is indeed the liberty of all nations ; the Germans alone are an exception.

LUDWIG BÖRNE, 1830

In France one is really freer in prison than at liberty in Germany.

LUDWIG BÖRNE, 1831

If the French had had such cowardly, slavish hearts as the Germans, they would have given us no sanctuary in their country, but would have surrendered us in chains to the vengeance of our enemies.

LUDWIG BÖRNE, 1834



We were ordered to adopt patriotism, and we became patriots ; for we do all that our princes command. But one must not understand, by this patriotism, the same emotion that bears this name here in France. The patriotism of the Frenchman consists in this—that his heart is warmed by it, and by this warmth it is so enlarged, so expanded, that it embraces not only his nearest relatives, but all France, all civilized territory, with its love ; the patriotism of the German, on the contrary, consists in this : that his heart grows smaller, that it shrinks like leather in the cold, that he hates all things foreign, that he no longer wishes to be a citizen of the world, no longer a European, but only a narrow-minded German.

HEINRICH HEINE, 1835



Here (in Paris) it is not as it is in Germany, where the soldiers are allowed to use the butts of their muskets if words and curses are of no avail ; here the public is treated with consideration ; here it is : Messieurs, have the goodness ! no matter whether the people addressed wear the blouse or the tail-coat ; so here the traffic police cannot perform such miracles as with us, where they are allowed to employ the methods which are commonly used against dogs and cattle, and also against human beings.

FRIEDRICH HEBBEL, 1844

German versus Hun

In Paris one is thrown out of doors with more consideration than one receives in Germany on one's appointment as privy councillor.

ARNOLD RUGE, 1846

We win our victories and suffer our defeats in Paris.

ARNOLD RUGE, 1846



What should we not have accomplished if, like the French, reserving our wretched private quarrels for an idle Sunday, we had gone hand in hand and had buried ourselves betimes in building a roof over the house which might shelter us all!

FRIEDRICH HEBBEL, 1850



How much more estimable, when compared with the Germans, are the French, with their rational empiricism, whose confessed aim is only to learn from Nature, and to investigate her processes, and not to prescribe her laws. It was merely by inductive methods that they achieved their profoundly conceived and felicitous division of the animal kingdom, which the Germans are not even able to esteem at its true value, so that they push it into the background, in order to show their own originality by their strange and perverse notions, whereupon they mutually admire one another—these just and perspicacious judges of intellectual desert! What fortune to be born amidst such a nation!

ARTHUR SCHOPENHAUER, 1851

The Frenchman arranges his ideas in the most logical and above all the most natural order, presenting them to his reader in due succession, for more convenient consideration, so that the latter can give to each his undivided attention. The German, on the other hand, interweaves them in a sentence of multiple dovetailed clauses, because he wants to say six things all at once instead of presenting them one by one.

ARTHUR SCHOPENHAUER, 1851

German and French

The French are more reliable as acquaintances, just because they are positive and are not given to dreaming; the dreamy German will meet you with a scowl one morning because he has dreamed that you have insulted him, or that his grandfather once received a kick from yours.

HEINRICH HEINE (*Literary Remains*, pub. 1869)



In France the wit would fain become a genius; in Germany the genius would fain be a wit.

FRIEDRICH NIETZSCHE, 1876-1879



The German has a strong inherent tendency toward discontent. I don't know which of us is acquainted with a contented compatriot. I know a great many Frenchmen who are perfectly contented with their lot and their experiences. If they adopt a profession they set themselves the task of acquiring by its practice a certain amount of property by the time they reach their forty-fifth or fiftieth year; when they have acquired it their sole ambition is to retire and live on their dividends for the rest of their lives. Compare the German with such people; his ambition is not limited from the outset to enjoying a moderate income after his fiftieth year: no, his ambition is boundless. The baker who set up in business for himself does not want, for example, to be merely the most properous baker in the neighbourhood; no, he wants to be a house-owner, a *rentier*; or, in accordance with the more spacious ideas of Berlin, he wants in the end to become a banker, a millionaire. His ambition has no limits. This is a characteristic which has its very good aspects—it never aims too low—but it has also a very questionable aspect in respect of political contentment.

OTTO VON BISMARCK, 1878



It is the misfortune of the French and German literature of the last hundred years that the Germans ran away too early

German versus Hun

from the school of the French—and the French, later on, were too quick to enter the school of the Germans.

FRIEDRICH NIETZSCHE, 1880

The German, who knows the secret of boring us with intellect, knowledge and emotion, and who has come to feel that boredom is a moral value, is afraid of French wit, lest it should put out the eyes of morality; but he feels delight as well as dread, like the bird in front of the rattlesnake.

FRIEDRICH NIETZSCHE, 1881



The Frenchman is, of course, much easier to govern than the German.

OTTO VON BISMARCK, 1889



In Paris and London one is no longer flogged. One is perfectly secure against a flogging there. Consequently, if one merely lives in Paris, one enjoys more respect in Germany than the most respected Germans. FRANK WEDEKIND, 1908



The Frenchman is not yet so far from the surface of his mind as the German is from the depths. KARL KRAUS, 1915



The German has judged and does judge the Frenchman too much by himself, and underestimates the burning French ambition, the limitless French vanity, the French hardness and cruelty—but also the French tensile strength and elasticity, and the admirable patriotism of every Frenchman.

PRINCE BÜLOW, 1921-1926

The Frenchman, who, like all Latins, is a born orator, is taught, by education and tradition, more than the average German, to realize the importance of form, and of the truth

German and French

which was emphasized long ago by Aeschines and Demosthenes, Quintilian and Cicero: that intellect and wit do not spoil an oration: that despite all the objections of the hypochondriacal and suicidal Faust, a good delivery not only means a successful speaker, but this alone ensures that his words will produce their full effect on his hearers.

PRINCE BÜLOW, 1921-1926



What could a world-war do against this Paris? It is a hundred times more beautiful here than before, since we have become a hundred times uglier.

JULIUS MEIER-GRAEFE, 1922



Method, procedure according to programme, mathematics, system, obedience to rule, lucidity; these were always the great qualities of the Frenchman, a great contrast to the German, whose nature is obscure, discursive, groping, centrifugal. But this precisely is the explanation of his faculty of constant evolution and regeneration; the German is always unfinished.

EGON FRIEDELL, 1928



The political and psychological tension between Germany and France has always been extreme and is becoming more intolerable. . . . The two peoples are greatly interested in each other, but it is a terribly negative interest, a stylistic negativism, which is almost prescribed if one does not wish to be accounted a pacifist and a traitor.

EUGEN DIESEL, 1934

XXVII

Germans and the Jews

The Germans will allow themselves to be oppressed everywhere, like the Jews, but like them they will be ineradicable.

WOLFGANG GOETHE, 1807

The Germans, like the Jews, allow themselves to be oppressed, but not extirpated. They do not allow themselves to be discouraged, and they would remain closely united even if it should be their fate no longer to possess a fatherland.

Germans do not go under entirely, any more than the Jews, because they are individuals.

WOLFGANG GOETHE, 1807-1808

The Germans will have to be transplanted and dispersed like the Jews, before the measure of goodness inherent in them can evolve in completeness, to the benefit of all the nations.

WOLFGANG GOETHE, 1808



I forgive the German people its hatred of the Jews, for it is still a childish people, and therefore, just like children, before it can stand freely on its feet, it needs a walking-crib so that it may learn, from this enclosure, how to dispense with restriction. The German people would tumble down a hundred times a day if it had no prejudices.

LUDWIG BÖRNE, 1820



Among foreigners one may hear it said that the Jews are not the most unpleasant things that come to them from Germany.

FRIEDRICH NIETZSCHE, 1876-1879

Germans and the Jews

By "divination" German science has discovered things that can hardly be represented, which possibly do not exist. One must almost be a Jew in order not to "divine" things as a German. FRIEDRICH NIETZSCHE, 1882-1888

What a treat is a Jew among the Germans!

FRIEDRICH NIETZSCHE, 1887

One knows what Goethe's fate was in sourly moral, old-maidish Germany. He was always obnoxious to the Germans; he was honestly admired only by Jewesses.

FRIEDRICH NIETZSCHE, 1888



XXVIII

At Home and Abroad

Alas! how honour leaves our German lands!

WALTER VON DER VOGELWEIDE, 1213



No nation is so conscious as the German of the worth of other nations, and it is, alas! but little regarded by most of them, precisely because of this ductility. It seems to me that the other nations are right; a nation that seeks to please all deserves to be despised by all.

GEORG CHRISTOPH LICHTENBERG, 1779

The healthy appetite of our ancestors for food seems now to have been transformed into a not quite so healthy appetite for reading; and just as formerly the Spaniards used to assemble in order to watch the Germans eat, so foreigners come to us now in order to watch us studying.

GEORG CHRISTOPH LICHTENBERG, 1789



Our altars, whereupon we sacrifice and burn incense, are portable altars, with which we go peddling in foreign lands, in order to set them down before no matter what gods.

JEAN PAUL FR. RICHTER, 1809



The folly of empty arrogance in respect of purely conventional privileges, the vaingloriousness of hollow vanity, the

At Home and Abroad

whole conceited, presumptuous world of Junkerdom, has become the legend and the scorn of the age.

JOSEPH GOERRES, 1819



If while I am abroad I come across a man who is too dis-obliging for a Frenchman, too ceremonious for a Briton, too simple for an Italian, too supple for a Spaniard, too lively for a Dutchman, too modest for a Russian—a man who obtrudes himself with sidelong bows, and with in-describable resignation does homage to all whom he believes to be more distinguished than himself—then my heart and the blood in my cheeks tell me: “This man is your com-patriot.”

KARL JULIUS WEBER, 1832-1840

Already I have often wondered why the proverb is not current throughout Europe: Coarse and boorish as a German student.

KARL JULIUS WEBER, 1832-1840



For that matter, in a foreign country the German element is even more unpleasing than at home. Only in the second and third generation, as a rule, does the German in Belgium, France and North America lose the links of his chains, of which in the first generation he boasts, or he strikes out with them like a madman.

ARNOLD RUGE, 1846



The Germans, like exported beer, do not improve abroad.

HEINRICH HEINE (*Literary Remains*, 1869)

The young girl said: “The gentleman must be very rich, for he is very ugly.” The public judges in the same way: “The man must be very learned, for he is very tedious.” Hence the success of many Germans in Paris.

HEINRICH HEINE (*Literary Remains*, 1869)

German versus Hun

Let the foreigner no longer look for naïveté, nor even originality in the Germans!

FRIEDRICH NIETZSCHE, 1876-1879



He who was unwilling that in the outer world the German should be despised as a dog was certain of imprisonment, of consuming the best years of his youth in a damp dungeon.

FRIEDRICH THEODOR VISCHER, 1878



The German abroad now enjoys a superfluity of admiration and respect as compared with earlier times, but no one is glad to see him; the Prussian, in particular, is still disliked in the southern countries of Europe; not on account of his pride—for he is not proud—but on account of his arrogance and his bad, harsh and often intrusive manners.

FRIEDRICH NIETZSCHE, 1882-1888



The German nation does not merely feel thwarted in its political ambition when it considers its position in the Transatlantic world; it also feels morally ashamed, since it has to confess that we Germans have hitherto contributed but very little to the great cosmopolitan achievements of modern international intercourse.

HEINRICH VON TREITSCHKE, 1884



The stiff stupidity of the intellectual demeanour, the clumsy grasp—this is so German that people abroad confuse it with the German character in general. The German has not the touch for nuances.

FRIEDRICH NIETZSCHE, 1888



This is what makes the German of today so disliked: He refers on every possible occasion to his “spiritual heroes,”

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although they almost always lived a life the precise contrary of his own; and although he has just as keen an eye to the main chance as his neighbours.

CHRISTIAN MORGENSTERN, 1905



It is very remarkable, the extent to which we have become the most detested nation on earth. All hope that we shall be defeated. ALFRED VON TIRPITZ, 24 September, 1914

It is astonishing, how greatly disliked we are, and how completely our whole diplomatic service has collapsed. An absolutely alarming incapacity is being revealed in almost every position. ALFRED VON TIRPITZ, 14 October, 1914



The feeling of the North German that he must not attribute to himself any more exalted function than that of being a sort of chronometer, has resulted in an idiom whose smart ugliness is atoned for by its laconic veracity. Someone says that a society has been formed somewhere in which not only artists and Bohemians, but even princes may be observed. And the speaker adds, in order to be more convincing, that they are *regular princes*. Nobility and beauty, love and art, daylight and dreams, war and peace, chance and destiny—everything is regular. Once a human being is conceived one only has to train him, and he goes regularly all by himself. Further directions are unnecessary. And these people wonder that there is an instinctive revolt, in the rest of humanity, against a process which, as a patent substitute for instinct, has reduced a man to being regularly where God has no appointment with him, and regularly to avoid the place where God waits so long for him in vain. KARL KRAUS, 1915



When a few years before the war one of our Roman ambassadors asked a clever Frenchman why the Germans were so

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hated in all parts of the world, the Frenchman answered that he could tell him in three words : *Il s'availlent trop.*

MAX SCHELER, 1917



Our heavy industrialists from the Lower Rhine are tremendous fellows, and their achievements have no greater admirer than myself. But in matters of business they have erected a churlish and unaccommodating character, which produces a most unpleasant impression on anyone who has not been educated in Prussia, and which the world of international commerce will not tolerate at any price, into a complete system, and they pride themselves even more on this than on their pre-eminent industrial ability.

ALBERT BALLIN, November 1918



Psychology is not the strong point of the German. He is all too ready to lose himself in a foreign nation without wholly surrendering himself to it. Anything that differs from that to which he is accustomed at home is mysterious to him, and seems, at the first glance, ugly; and he often criticizes it loudly, instead of trying to understand the other people's way of life.

MAXIMILIAN HARDEN, 1918

The (German) master was also a lieutenant in the reserve, and he sought to implant in our young minds, not a real love for our fatherland, and for all things good and noble, but patriotism and loyalty; noisy enthusiasm instead of reverence and obedience. We were taught to believe, not to think. But we were the only noble nation, beloved by gods and men. In foreign parts another story was told.

MAXIMILIAN HARDEN, December 1918



The feeling against the Germans has, for a number of reasons, grown more acute since the '90's. We older people

At Home and Abroad

look back with peculiar emotion to the days of Wilhelm I, when we were still one of the foremost peoples in the world, and welcome everywhere. ALFRED VON TIRPITZ, 1919

We threw ourselves into other people's arms, then made ourselves objectionable to them, and hardly ever lost an opportunity of telling them how splendidly we were getting on. We never tried to see the other people's point of view. . . . We sounded fanfares which were not in accordance with our position. ALFRED VON TIRPITZ, 1919

The German is perfectly well able to enter into the arguments advanced by other people, but finds it extremely difficult to understand their real motives. ALFRED VON TIRPITZ, 1919



Our unpopularity was due also to the fact that we underestimated the importance of form, of appearance, concerning which the Greek philosopher had already demonstrated that the great majority of human beings judge and feel according to the appearance, and not the essential nature of things.

PRINCE BÜLOW, 1921-1926

A considerable proportion of precisely the educated classes of our people fail to understand the necessity of good form in international intercourse. Many Germans give offence abroad by a boorish tone, by arrogance, by constant and all too loud boasting. It was far less the *miles gloriosus* who made us unpopular—the German officer, apart from a diminishing number of exceptions, was well-bred and courteous—than the conceited “Herr Doktor,” even the “Herr Professor” and the pioneer of commerce, whose path was strewn with corpses. We had never been especially liked; we began to be hated. . . . Gradually we were getting on the world’s nerves. But we ourselves never realized this until the end of the world war. PRINCE BÜLOW, 1921-1926

German versus Hun

What, then, do foreigners learn of the Germans? They come to our open-air gymnasium and think they see us doing the knee-bend, or the upstart, or perhaps the giant circle. Ah, if they knew us they would know that we are really performing a passage of the Ninth Symphony on the bars. For us, there is nothing that we have not done with a profounder significance.

WALTER KIAULEHN, 1932



We are living as members of our nation and as Europeans in a painful state of contradictory and equivocal feeling.

EUGEN DIESEL, 1934

At home, within the protective rampart of our own newspapers, with the spiritual support of the magical potential of our nation, we feel that we are secure, but abroad we are out of place, we are foreign bodies.

EUGEN DIESEL, 1934

XXIX

Patriam Fugimus

So many unreasonable requests have been addressed to me by the pedants on the other side of the Alps that the whole of my time for twenty years would not suffice to satisfy their demands. I have no need of any news from Germany.

JOHANN JOACHIM WINCKELMANN, Rome, 1766

I have wasted enough time in this land of martyrdom.

JOHANN JOACHIM WINCKELMANN, 1766

Please assure Herr Lessing of my great esteem for him; I cannot write, for the less correspondence with Germany the better.

JOHANN JOACHIM WINCKELMANN, 1766



The character of the Germans in two words: *patriam fugimus*.

GEORG CHRISTOPH LICHTENBERG, 1775



I for my part see only one thing that can make me insensitive to the misfortune of having been born a German, and that is the *dulces ante omnia Musae*, the love of my art.

CHRISTIAN MARTIN WIELAND, 1780



I write as a citizen of the world, who serves no sovereign. Early I lost my fatherland, to exchange it for the great world, which I knew only through the telescope.

FRIEDRICH SCHILLER, 1784

German versus Hun

You will not believe how much courage I need in order to continue this joyless existence here—and to live only on the riches of phantasy. I am like one who has been wrecked on a strange coast and who does not understand the language of the country. Day by day I make one dismal discovery after another, telling me that I shall find it difficult to live with this people.

FRIEDRICH SCHILLER, 1789



I shall probably never return to my fatherland.

HEINRICH VON KLEIST, 1802



I now find myself in a quite peculiar mood . . . all that is German is repulsive to me. . . . Everything German affects me like an emetic. The German language rends my ears. My own poems sometimes disgust me, when I see that they are written in German. Even the writing of this note is disagreeable to me, because the German script has a painful effect on my nerves [continued in French]. I would never have believed that the brutes one calls Germans could be, as a race, so tedious and at the same time so malicious. Directly my health is restored I shall leave Germany; I shall go to Arabia; there I will live a pastoral life; I shall be a man in the full sense of the sense of the term: I will live among camels who are not students, I will write Arabic verses, beautiful as the Morlaccat, and I will sit at last on the sacred rock on which Modjun sighed for Leila.

HEINRICH HEINE, 1822



You ask me why I am fleeing from my fatherland? I have no fatherland; and I have not yet seen a foreign country. Where there are prisons I recognize my home; where I find persecution I breathe the atmosphere of my childhood. The moon is as near to me as Germany.

LUDWIG BÖRNE, 1823

Patriam Fugimus

There are only three educated, civilized peoples: the French, the Chinese and the Persians. I am proud to be a Persian.

. . . Ah, how I long for Ispahan! Miserable me, I am far from its pleasant minarets and fragrant gardens! Alas, it is a dreadful fate for a Persian poet, that he must flounder in your base, wooden German tongue, and be tortured to death by your equally wooden postchaises, your bad climate, your stupid tobacco-faces, your Roman pandects, your philosophical gibberish and your scurvy natures. O Firdausi! O Jāmi! O Saadi, how wretched is your brother! Oh, how I long for the roses of Shiraz!

HEINRICH HEINE, 1824



I do not wish to cultivate German acquaintances.

COUNT AUGUST VON PLATEN, 1827



Never shall I like this people, never shall I feel comfortable in this country, with its capricious atmosphere, its cantankerous heavens, its whimpering Spring and its peevish Autumn.

LUDWIG BÖRNE, 1828



It is sad to have to deny one's fatherland.

ROBERT SCHUMANN, 1829



The light of the sun, the sound of the human voice, the rumour of life delighted me. I was no longer shivering among fishes; I was no longer in Germany.

LUDWIG BÖRNE, 1830



Things cannot go worse with me here than at home, where I have nothing but strife and want, where I cannot sleep in security, where men poison all the sources of life.

HEINRICH HEINE (Paris), 1831

German versus Hun

To escape would be easy if one did not drag the Fatherland about with one on the soles of one's shoes! A painful parody of Danton! It is painful to stroll in the Luxembourg and to drag about with one everywhere a fragment of Hamburg or Prussia or Bavaria.

HEINRICH HEINE, 1831

(Shortly before his arrest Danton was advised to flee. He replied: "Emporte-t-on sa patrie à la semelle de ses souliers?"



It would be terrible if I really dared not enter Germany again! For then, of course, I could no longer *leave* Germany, and I should be robbed of the fairest hours of my life.

LUDWIG BÖRNE, 1831



Time and my youth were in Germany wasted; refreshment Came from the South too late for my weary spirit.

AUGUST COUNT VON PLATEN-HALLERMUNDE, 1834



The Fatherland has astonishingly little attraction for me.

FRIEDRICH HEBBEL, 1845

I honestly confess that I shudder at the thought of the German atmosphere; not because, like many another silly fellow, I insist that one can breathe only under skies of azure blue, but simply and solely because to my mind the first fruit of political movements in themselves of the greatest importance, and highly desirable, seems to consist in a barbaric indifference to the highest processes of the human intellect, such as stifles all artistic impulse.

FRIEDRICH HEBBEL (Rome), 1845

If the metallic foundation of my life were as well based as the intellect I would not again enter Germany, but I would

Patriam Fugimus

play my part in the business of national development, as far as my powers enabled me, quietly and easily from a distance, and leave it to the gods to decide where and how they would make use of my labours. Now I must take part in the conflict and buy myself bread rations at the cost of mortal wounds.

FRIEDRICH HEBBEL, 1845



Yes, I am escaping. An intolerable yoke is crushing me. I cannot forgive Nature for tolerating this generation: I feel my heart shrinking at the sight of these dismal figures, who have sold their souls and kept only their bellies.

ARNOLD RUGE, 1846



Recently I met some of the local German professors here (in Zürich) at tea. Horror seized me, and drove me with renewed longing back to the arms of my Swiss friends.

RICHARD WAGNER, 1850



So I ought, as a good patriot, to launch into praise of the Germans and all things German, and rejoice that I was born a member of this and no other nation? But, as the Spanish proverb says: *Cada uno cuenta de la feria, como le va en alla* (A man's report of the fair depends on the luck he had there). . . . Doltish, industrious charlatans, scribbling respectable nonsense, without wit or merit: those are the men for Germany; not such men as myself.

ARTHUR SCHOPENHAUER, 1851



Were I to be amnestied this very day you would see with what perfect equanimity I should stay on here in my beloved Switzerland, and hardly honour the hallowed soil of Germany with so much as a flying visit.

RICHARD WAGNER, 1851

German versus Hun

Long I was merely a man among men, but lo! in a moment
History chose to condemn me again to become a German.

FRIEDRICH HEBBEL, 1857-1863



I renounce Germany with a calm and cold heart; and I know
that I must do so.

RICHARD WAGNER, 1859

It is only with real horror that I now think of Germany
and my future undertakings there. God forgive me, but I
can see there nothing but what is petty and miserable: the
appearance and presumption of excellence without any solid
foundation.

RICHARD WAGNER, 1860

We have no fatherland! And if I am "German" I assuredly
bear my Germany within me.

RICHARD WAGNER, 1860



I cannot endure it in Germany; the spirit of pettiness and
servility permeates everything, down to the smallest local
journals, and up to the respectable artists and scholars—
together with an empty-minded insolence toward all inde-
pendent men and nations.

FRIEDRICH NIETZSCHE, 1876-1879



Those who leave the country are the capable and kindly;
just as once upon a time the migration of the peoples de-
prived the home-keeping Germans, in the Goths, Vandals,
Franks and Lombards, of their really heroic strains. Those
who remained were the Philistines.

RICHARD WAGNER, 1879



A good German—forgive me if I repeat it for the tenth
time—is a German no longer.

FRIEDRICH NIETZSCHE, 1882-1888

Patriam Fugimus

It seems that I am a German of a variety that is becoming extinct. "To be a good German" I said once, "is to cease to be a German," but no one will grant me that today. Goethe would perhaps have agreed with me.

FRIEDRICH NIETZSCHE, 1882-1888

They (the Germans) are so foreign to me; in order to live with them I had to teach the precise and absolute opposite of what I believed to be true, and what seemed to me agreeable; and it was among the Germans that I invented the proverb: "Not only gold, but leather glitters."

FRIEDRICH NIETZSCHE, 1882-1888

I cannot endure this race, with which one is always in bad company; which has no touch for nuances, no wit in its feet, and cannot even walk.

FRIEDRICH NIETZSCHE, 1888



That Russia is my home is one of those great and mysterious certainties by which I live.

RAINER MARIA RILKE, 1904



. . . They couple the microscope with the catechism and philosophy with the police. Without any demur, without humane compromise, they resolve on a thing, and they do it. There is no place for me in Germany now.

JAKOB WASSERMANN, 1915



I said, I am not a very good German, not a proper German. However, I am quite forgetting that it is almost inherent in German humanity to behave in an un-German and even an anti-German manner; that a tendency to cosmopolitanism, which disintegrates national feeling, is according to reliable

German versus Hun

judges inseparable from the essential character of German nationality; that one may perhaps have to lose one's Germany in order to find it; that perhaps no higher Germany is possible without the addition of an alien element; that it was precisely the exemplary Germans who were Europeans, and who would have felt that to be nothing but German would have been a barbarous restriction.

THOMAS MANN, 1918



Many millions of Germans who left the country were lost to us both in appearance and in spirit, fertilizing our more recent and most dangerous adversaries. Without German labours, in the past and in the present, the Entente would have fallen far short of what it did accomplish against us; one of the bitter realizations of our position.

ALFRED VON TIRPITZ, 1919

Even if absorption into the American world, in the circumstances which our emigrants encountered there, was inherently unavoidable, yet the manner in which they surrendered their own nationality, and the promptitude with which they did so, was due to the feebleness of our national feeling. . . . With such experiences and such impression of the part played by the Germans in fertilizing alien civilizations, the rejoicings and unveilings of monuments so common among us have always left me unmoved.

ALFRED VON TIRPITZ, 1919



If one looked back upon this cloud-covered fatherland from the far, sunny South, it seemed as though the heavens had become so murky and opaque from all the uprising phrases and vaporous half-thoughts. Ugh, who would wish to return! Who would not rather wish to forget all that, and, if

Patriam Fugimus

he did live there, to live in solitude, in his own truth, behind
locked doors?

BRUNO FRANK, 1928



I declare that I no longer belong to this people. I can re-
member only that I once belonged to the German Army.

CAPTAIN ERNST ROEHM, 1928

XXX

Hitlers before Hitler

German stock is foremost in all things.

WALTER VON DER VOGELWEIDE, 1170-1230



The soul for God, all else for me!

FRIEDRICH WILHELM I, King of Prussia, 1713-1740



Ne'er was another land
Just to the stranger
As thou, my Fatherland!

FRIEDRICH WILHELM KLOPSTOCK, 1768



Thy heart is German, German is my heart!
It loves thee! Know it, and accursed be
What Gallic manners teach!

JOHANN FRIEDRICH HAHN, 1773



There is therefore no way out of this: if you (the German people) sink into the depths the whole of humanity sinks with you, without hope of eventual restoration.

JOHANN GOTTLIEB FICHTE, 1808

If there is any truth in what has been expounded in this speech, then it is you, among all the more recent nations, in whom the germ of human perfectibility most definitely

Hitlers Before Hitler

resides, and it is to you that the progressive development of humanity is entrusted. JOHANN GOTTLIEB FICHTE, 1808



Of all the lands of East and West
This German country likes me best:
God's blessing showers upon it.

GEORG PHILIP SCHMIDT OF LÜBECK, 1810



Grant that if Germany remain united
She shall prescribe the laws of all the world.

THEODOR KÖRNER, 1814



From their training in school the school-children learn in their early years to discard their Germanity, and in successful cases they are turned out almost as un-German as journalists and writers for the newspapers.

FRIEDRICH LUDWIG JAHN, 1833



Deutschland, Deutschland über alles, über alles in der Welt!
HOFFMANN VON FALLERSLEBEN, 1841



Prussia can assert her standpoint in Europe only if she exploits the greater uniformity of her inhabitants, the superior education of her nobility and middle class, with the utmost energy in a war system of her own.

VON BOYEN (Minister of War), 1771-1848



That beautiful idealism of war, which lies indestructible in the blood of every proper German.

HEINRICH VON TREITSCHKE, 1858

German versus Hun

A long peace heaps up an accumulation of rotten ferment. For this reason we are in desperate need of a vigorous and joyous war, profoundly gratifying to the nations—that is, those nations which are the upholders of European civilization.

PROFESSOR HEINRICH LEO, 1859



It is not Prussia's intention to live on the usufruct of the possessions which she has acquired.

KING WILHELM OF PRUSSIA, 1861



Und es mag am deutschen Wesen
Einmal noch die Welt genesen.

(The world may yet find healing in the German character.)

EMANUEL GEIBEL, 1861



The purpose for which we are fighting is simply the equality of rights of the European nations, the certainty that an unruly neighbour cannot again disturb us in the labours of peace, and rob us of the fruits of our industry. We want to have guarantees of this. DAVID FRIEDRICH STRAUSS, 1870



Perpetual peace is a dream, and not even a beautiful dream.

HELMUTH VON MOLTKE, 1880

People expect us to be magnanimous enough to set the first example of disarmament. Has the German Michel ever drawn the sword save to defend his own skin?

HELMUTH VON MOLTKE, 1880

Without war the world would be lost, sunk in the slough of materialism.

HELMUTH VON MOLTKE, 1881

Hitlers Before Hitler

We Germans fear God, but nothing else in the world.

OTTO VON BISMARCK, 1888

This is precisely the advantage which the German character possesses over all others, that the German finds satisfaction in his own recognition of his own worth, and has no need of prerogative or overlordship, since he is himself.

OTTO VON BISMARCK, 1895

To fight because of a passion for conquest . . . seems to me a sort of ruthlessness, I might say a Bonapartist, alien ruthlessness, which is foreign to our German sense of righteousness.

OTTO VON BISMARCK, 1895



When so great a nation as the German nation rises *en masse* in its wrath France must needs tremble, even though she had ten Napoleon the Firsts.

HELMUTH VON MOLTKE, 1891-1893



Until the Social-Democratic leaders are dragged out of the Reichstag by soldiers and shot no improvement can be hoped for. We need such a law that it would suffice to be a Social-Democrat in order to be transported to the Carolines.

KAISER WILHELM II, 1899

Quarter will not be given, prisoners will not be taken! As a thousand years ago the Huns under King Etzel won a name that even to this day reveals their might in legend and tradition, so shall you Germans make such a name for yourselves in China that for a thousand years to come no Chinese shall ever again dare even to look askance at any German.

KAISER WILHELM II, 27 June, 1900

German versus Hun

The impression which the Siegesallee makes upon the foreigner is absolutely overwhelming. In all quarters an immense respect for German sculpture is evident.

KAISER WILHELM II, 1901

First to shoot and behead the Socialists, and make them harmless, if need be by massacre, and then a foreign war. But not earlier and not *a tempo*!

KAISER WILHELM II, December 1905



If the progress of civilization were to go so far that we could no longer go to war with confidence in our army, then I don't give tuppence for civilization!

VON FALKENHAYN, Minister of War, May 1914



Never again will Germany surrender to the reactionary Russian government the peoples whom she has liberated between the Baltic and the Volhynian marshes—whether they be Poles or Balts or Lithuanians or Letts.

REICHSKANZLER VON BETHMANN-HOLLWEG, April 1916



German People! If the promise of Jesus, dying on the Cross, is to be for you; if an Easter is to follow your Good Friday, and if your cause is to conquer the world, as His has conquered it: then endure your cross in this war until night falls upon your enemies, while the dawn of Easter breaks over you.

Court Chaplain DOEHRING, 1917

XXXI

The Third Reich

We wish to be simple again, we wish to be German again;
we demand the true Socialism. DIETRICH ECKART, 1919



To flatter the instincts of the masses is unworthy of us.

Völkischer Beobachter, 1920



We demand a campaign within the law against deliberate
political lies and their propagation by the Press.

Programme of the NATIONAL SOCIALIST PARTY
(N.S.D.A.P.), Point 23. February 1920



Who still believes that England was ever concerned to secure
the freedom of the small nations, when she robs one of the
greatest civilized nations of this earth, Germany, of the last
remnant of her freedom? ADOLF HITLER, February 1921



Poland is like a hysterical woman who has to be given a
blow on the head before she will allow her rescuer to pull
her out of the water. ALFRED ROSENBERG, 1921



We are not fighting to make the people happy. We are fight-
ing in order to compel it to follow its destined course.

ERWIN KERN, 1922

German versus Hun

The whole of modern Russia now constitutes nothing more than a demolished civilization and a colony ripe for fertilization by foreign capital.

ADOLF HITLER, 28 July, 1922 (in Munich)

I feel that I am the best German, who has willed the best for the German people.

ADOLF HITLER, 26 February, 1924 (in Munich)



In order that the State may be a real State among other States it needs a sphere of conquest around it. It must conquer in order to be.

H. FREYER, 1925



An Open Letter from Dr. Goebbels to the leaders of the Moscow Bolsheviks.

You and I are fighting one another although we have not been actual enemies. We are thereby frittering away our energies, and we never achieve our purpose. Perhaps the utmost necessity will draw us together. Perhaps! We young men, you and I, bear on our shoulders the destiny of generations. Let us never forget that. I greet you!

DR. GOEBBELS, in the *Völkischer Beobachter*, 14 November, 1925



What a man wishes he hopes and believes.

ADOLF HITLER, 1926

It must be a greater honour to be a citizen of this Reich as a street sweeper than to be king in a foreign State.

ADOLF HITLER (*Mein Kampf*, p. 491)



Democracy is the dictatorship of thrusters. It was so already in Plato's time; and it is so today.

DR. GOEBBELS, in *Der Angriff*, 16 April, 1928

The Third Reich

Germany has an ennobled form of democracy.

DR. GOEBBELS

We are becoming deputies to the Reichstag in order to paralyse the Weimar mentality by means of its own subvention. If democracy is stupid enough to give us free railway-tickets and salaries for this cruel kindness, that is its own affair. We don't trouble our heads about that. For us every legal means of revolutionizing the existing state of things is just. DR. GOEBBELS, in *Der Angriff*, 30 April, 1928

The political citizen is an obstacle on the highway of the future, and he must therefore be overcome.

DR. GOEBBELS in *Der Angriff*, 22 October, 1928



KERN: No nation that wishes to perfect itself in its might renounces the claim to rule as far as its full and original proportions extend. . . .

VON SALOMON: Well, in what dream is the fulfilment of this power revealed?

KERN: *In the victory of Germanism over the earth.*

ERNST VON SALOMON, 1930

(This dialogue, which von Salomon describes in his book, *Die Geächteten*—“The Proscripts”—took place before the murder of Rathenau on 24 June, 1922.)



As regards the Soviet Union the Government of the Reich is desirous of friendly relations profitable to both sides.

ADOLF HITLER, 23 March, 1933 (speech in Berlin)

Neither in a political nor in an economic sense could the use of any sort of violence in Europe bring about a situation more favourable than that which obtains today. Even in the

German versus Hun

case of a decisive success the end-result of a fresh solution of European problems by violence would be a still greater disturbance of the European equilibrium, and so, in one way or another, the seed of later renewed conflicts and fresh entanglements would be sown.

ADOLF HITLER, 17 May, 1933 (speech in Berlin)

The National Socialist Revolution has overpowered the State of treachery and perjury and in its place has again set up an empire of honour, fidelity, and decency.

ADOLF HITLER, Proclamation issued 1 September, 1933

If in Western or Central Europe one single people should fall victim to Bolshevism this poison would eat its way onward and devastate what is now the oldest and fairest cultural treasure on earth.

ADOLF HITLER, 3 September, 1933 (speech in Nuremberg)

The path which Europe was following led directly to Bolshevism. And I need not picture what this Bolshevism would have meant for Europe!

ADOLF HITLER, 24 October, 1933 (speech in Berlin)

What we subscribe to we shall keep, and if we think we cannot keep it we do not subscribe to it!

ADOLF HITLER, 28 October, 1933 (speech in Stuttgart)



The essence of National Socialism is faith, and its deeds are love.

HANS KERRL, 1935



I am anxious that the German people should not forget what community means, and for this reason it must be continually practised. The individual will be granted no leisure

The Third Reich

to play skittles in the evening, when he could chatter and sing. He will be compelled to march.

DR. ROBERT LEY, 1935



There is no people on earth that ever since it came into being has been and is, with the same intensity, the upholder of the ideal of salvation, and therefore of the ideal of sacrifice, as the German people. No people that has consciously or unconsciously felt itself so strictly bound to ensure that the will to salvation shall continually break through afresh with indefectible certainty and strive for realization. No people on earth is so heavily burdened by the inevitability of its mission.

HANNS GOBSCH, 1935

Our actions are determined not by hatred, but by love!—Can this people dwell otherwise than in the heart of the ancient Earth?

HANNS GOBSCH, 1935

The German people is making its way in the world; not in order to conquer, not to indulge the lust for power! Nowhere is the German more selfless than beyond the frontiers.

HANNS GOBSCH, 1935



It will always be one of the finest jests of democracy that it should itself have given its deadly enemies the means by which it was destroyed.

HANS SCHWARZ VAN BERK, 1935



To speak of German history, whether as a whole process or as a multiplicity of individual phenomena, means today: to start from the German era of Adolf Hitler.

THEODOR STIEFENHOFER, 1935

German versus Hun

The German Lebensraum is a demand upon our people. It is no unalterable state of affairs, but an eternal task.

A. HILLEN ZIEGFELD, 1935



These (German) men and women do not wish for sunshine and pleasure alone; these people know that life is compounded of sun and rain, joy and sorrow, holidays and working days, good days and bad. All this, my Leader, is known to these people, simple and yet so splendid. It is what you have taught this nation.

DR. ROBERT LEY, May 1936

It is often declared that we are godless. I confess openly: it is only through Adolf Hitler that I have found my god.

DR. ROBERT LEY, 1936



Once, it is true, in the time of the migration of the peoples, the Christian religion played a great part. For us today the Christian era is replaced by the National Socialist era.

ADOLF HITLER (Nuremberg Party Rally), 1936



It is my profession of faith that a National Socialist philosophy will one day be the queen of the faculties of a future University.

ALFRED ROSENBERG, 1936



For the first time since the Thirty Years War Germany and the world are again confronted with a cosmographical crisis: the banner of Adolf Hitler is at the same time the banner of Aryan humanity, which waves above the German Lebensraum, defending it against world Bolshevism.

DR. BERNHARD RUST, 1936



The Nordic man needs freedom as the breath of life—personal as well as national freedom. If this is taken from him

The Third Reich

he conquers it again, or he dies. "Rather dead than a slave" is an old Frisian motto. The Nordic man cannot thrive under foreign rule, or under a despotism, or in a "collective."

PROFESSOR FRITZ LENZ, 1936

The Nordic man has little understanding of the means of exerting a psychic influence over other human beings. Above all, he finds it difficult to gain an insight into the souls of other people. His instincts are individualistic in their tendencies rather than social.

PROFESSOR FRITZ LENZ, 1936

The commandment "Thou shalt not kill" is a typical expression of the spirit of the Near East. The Nordic man is more naïve in this respect.

PROFESSOR FRITZ LENZ, 1936



Against the clique of Judeo-Marxist Bolshevism there is only one expedient—if they attack, to strike back at once.

ADOLF HITLER, 1937



Since Adolf Hitler has been in power you have a private life only when you are asleep. There is no other private life. The moment you wake you are the soldiers of Hitler.

DR. ROBERT LEY, 1937

The Führer is the greatest artist that Germany has ever produced. He loves the beautiful. And he therefore uplifts the nation to all things beautiful. Germany has grown better since 1933; the individual human being has grown better.

DR. ROBERT LEY, 1937

We have filled even the atmosphere above Germany with National Socialism, and he who would breathe in Germany must breathe National Socialism.

DR. ROBERT LEY, 1937



Who serves Adolf Hitler serves Germany; who serves Germany serves God!

BALDUR VON SCHIRACH, 1937

German versus Hun

We have no use for a Christian death and the forgiveness of sins. A German who believes in God is no sinner and needs neither forgiveness of his sins nor the consolations of the Church when he dies.

From *Durchbruch*, 1937

The German world can break away from the whole history of the world up to date and in its originality begin a new history.

From *Durchbruch*, 1937

We have knocked so long upon the closed gates that at last all (our) precious (German) blood has entered the battle and is leading Germany to cultural and religious perfection.

From *Durchbruch*, 1937



We know where we started, but God only knows where we shall finish.

DR. GOEBBELS, 1940



Monstrous lies cannot be propagated as safely, in this age of wireless telephony, as was the case during the World War.

DR. H. G. PRIDAT-GUZATIS, 1939



The German radio is the greatest cultural institution in the world.

H. J. WEINBRENNER, 1939



Today the German nation is incorporated in Adolf Hitler, because it finds itself again in his personality.

DR. OTTO DIETRICH

XXXII

Whither?

Reeling vaguely to and fro between Heathendom and Christianity, between the Hörselberg and the Gralsburg, even Wagner sought that Third Empire of which Ibsen's Apostate whispered his foreboding. But the Julians are deluded: there is no Third Empire. There are only two in all eternity.

KARL BLEIBTREU, 1904



The idea of the Third Reich might be the greatest of all the self-delusions which the German people has ever entertained. It would be very German if the people were to count on the idea, and be appeased by it. It might perish through it.

MÖLLER VAN DEN BRUCK, 1922



The psychopaths are always with us. But when our heads are cool we certify them, and when they are hot . . . they rule us.

ERNST KRETSCHMER, 1929



The National Socialists believe that they can manage without the world, or against it, and that they can build their castles in the air without even a silent but very perceptible opposition from outside.

OSWALD SPENGLER, 1933



In accordance with the old law of Montesquieu, that every system of government maintains itself by the means through

German versus Hun

which it rose to power, the Hitler system makes use of propaganda and terror.

DR. OTTO STRASSER, 1935



Where Hitler marches the spirit of Mohammed prevails, that spirit of blind, raging fanaticism, which knows and recognizes nothing but the uncompromising accomplishment of its own fantastic aims, even at the cost of disregarding the most primitive human rights, and by means of the most brutal violence.

EDGAR ALEXANDER, 1937

The Hitler myth is first and foremost a product of the evolutionary time-process; that is, of the German climacteric, and the men and powers which suffer and prevail in this crisis.

EDGAR ALEXANDER, 1937

All that has developed in the course of the evolution of German history during the last few centuries, in the realm of religious and spiritual life, as a falling away from the unity and integrity of the Germano-Christian ideal of life, is now, thanks to National Socialism, undergoing a sort of spiritual renaissance and organic recapitulation, which, viewed as a whole, one may with good reason describe as the *negative philosophy of the German character*.

EDGAR ALEXANDER, 1937

It is not Hitler who has bridled the present age; but rather the passions of resentment born of the exigency of German life have shaped the character and the government of the National Socialist dictator.

EDGAR ALEXANDER, 1937

The National Socialist myth is the organized will to revert to the primitive conditions of the pre-Christian stage of development of our German civilization.

EDGAR ALEXANDER, 1937

Whither ?

The meaning and purpose of the National Socialist political system is simply this, and can only be this: to mould the German nation, by the inexorable exclusion, suppression and extirpation of every disturbing counter-impulse, into a weapon for the "coming war," infinitely compliant, troubled by no critical ideas, and spellbound in blind and fanatical ignorance.

THOMAS MANN, 1937

Since truth and right are absolutely one and the same, and since right is only the application of truth, let this be stigmatized as the most scandalous maxim that has ever been uttered in the face of the civilized world: "Right is what is of profit to the people." There is nothing more abominable; it is abomination itself, and the source of all abomination. Here immorality and philistinism are united; this is downright evil; it is barbarism.

THOMAS MANN, 1938

In the decisive respect—that is, in respect of economics—National Socialism is nothing more than Bolshevism: These two enemies are brothers, of whom the younger has learned practically everything from the elder, Russian brother—yet not the moral elements, for his Socialism is morally spurious, mendacious, and contemptuous of humanity; but its economic results are the same as those of Bolshevism.

THOMAS MANN, 1938

Terrorism corrupts humanity; that is obvious; it disorganizes a man's character, releases the evil in him, makes him a terrified hypocrite, a shameless informer; it makes him contemptible—and that is why these contemners of humanity are so fond of terrorism. Their lust for desecrating humanity is obscene and pathological. Of this we have evidence and proof in the treatment of the Jews in Germany, and the concentration camps, and what has happened in them, and is still happening.

THOMAS MANN, 1938

German versus Hun

They pretend, it is true, that they wish to restore to humanity its honour, defiled by Christianity, inasmuch as they absolve it from inherited sin and inspire it with the spirit of Germanic heroics; and they always pose as the restorers of honour. Indeed, if we are to believe the radio, they have even "given Germany back her honour." But in actual practice they cherish the most grotesque contempt for humanity—grotesque by reason of its subject, grotesque when we consider who they are that feel this contempt: of all men the most contemptible.

THOMAS MANN, 1938



It is a dismal experience to hear it continually repeated that National Socialism is a lapse into barbarism, into the Dark Ages, into the times that preceded the modern progress of humanity, when the speaker has no suspicion that the secularization of life which accompanied the emergence of humanism is the very soil on which anti-Christian religious movements like National Socialism are able to grow.

ERICH VÖGELIN, 1938



The bombs which in Poland have fallen on hospitals and children's homes did not descend upon them by chance, obeying merely the force of gravity, but were dropped by men whose brains had previously been brought into a determined relation to evil.

HERMANN STEINHAUSEN, 1939

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